VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

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(VOICE OF NON-VIOLENT AND TRUTHFUL NATIONALISM)

VOLUME IV
(Book 2)

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Thus in a district where the Mahomedans are in majority they will get 60 per cent and the Hindus 40 per cent. Similarly, where the Hindus are in majority they are to get 60 per cent and the Mahomedans 40 per cent. The question as to whether there should be separate or mixed electorates is postponed for the present to ascertain in the views of both communities.

(*c*) 55 per cent of the Government posts should go to the Mahomedans to be worked out in the following manner—fixing of seats of different classes of appointments. The Mahomedans satisfying the least should be preferred till the above percentage is attained, and after that according to the proportion of 55 to 45, the former to the Mahomedans and the latter to the non-Mohamedans, subject to this that for the intervening years, a small percentage of posts, say 20 per cent should go to the Hindus.

(*d*) (1) In not allowing any resolution or enactment which affects the religion of any of the different communities without the consent of 75 per cent of the elected members of that community.

(2) In not allowing music in procession before any mosque.

(3) In not interfering with cow-killing for religious sacrifices.

(4) In providing that no legislation or enactment in respect of cow-killing for food will be taken up in the Council, but endeavour should be made by members of both the communities outside the Council to bring about an understanding between the communities.

(5) In providing that cow-killing should be carried on in such a manner as not to wound the religious feelings of Hindus.

(6) In providing for the formation every year of representative committees in every sub-division, of which half the members should be Mohammedans and half

Hindus, each committee choosing the President from among themselves with Power to arbitrate upon any dispute between the Hindus and the Mohammedans in accordance with the provisions herein before stated

MEANING OF SWARAJ*

If I rise, it is not to make a long speech. I want to introduce the programme of this party to you at this gathering of the members of the Swarajya Party. I will not go into the details of that programme either, but will deal only with the salient features and certain principles upon which the whole of the programme is based. I need hardly tell you at this hour that the object of the Swarajya Party is to secure *Swaraj*. Directly I say that, all kinds of questions are raised upon that. It is asked : 'What is the kind of Swaraj that you are striving for ? And some friends of mine are so anxious to have the details of the *Swaraj* that in their attempt to define they lose sight of the real principle upon which the whole fight for Swaraj is based, and that is that we do not want any particular system of government ; we want the right to establish our own system of government. That is the central idea of *Swaraj*. I have said elsewhere and repeat it, today, that *Swaraj*—the right *Swaraj*—is not to be confused with any particular system of government. Systems of government come and go. Systems of government are established in one day, only to be broken the other day, and another system is established upon the ashes of the old system. What I want today is a clear declaration by the people of this country that we have got the right to establish our own system of government according to the temper and genius of our people. And we want that right to be recognised by our alien rulers.

One thing is certain. We often hear of questions as to the kind of *Swaraj*, whether it will be within the Empire or outside the Empire, and questions are put with regard to that I have often been interviewed by representatives of English

*Extracts from a speech delivered at the All-India Swaraj Party Conference held at Calcutta in August, 1924.

newspapers upon that question. When they put that question to me, I always thought they had doubts in their minds that we were creating difficulties. But my ways are perfectly clear. I want my liberty. I want my freedom. I want my right to establish our own system of government. If that is inconsistent with our being within the Empire, my love for my freedom is greater than my love for the Empire. Therefore let us not try to fathom what is going to happen in future. Let us rest content with the struggle of today and let that struggle be conducted on the right to govern ourselves. We must be the judges of what system of government is good for us and what system of government will not suit us. It is not for other people to constitute themselves as our judges.

That being the kind of *Swaraj*, the next question is : How can it be secured ? I have put forward from different platforms my view of Non-cooperation. I am told that is not the correct view. Well, let us not fight about words.

Whatever other people may mean by Non-cooperation I do not know. But I know what it means to me. And in the light of what I understand it to be, I maintained and still maintain that the only method of fighting this Government and winning *Swaraj* is by applying Non-cooperation everywhere. When we started this party, we defined it—not that we defined, but we described it, I am afraid of definitions. There is such a thing as Deductive Logic. I am always afraid of this. When you start a definition, critics are not wanting in this country who will ask you to define the definition and so on. This is how we put our case before the public.

Now this party declared that the policy of Non-violent Non Cooperation was to create an atmosphere of resistance and include all such activities which stand to create an atmosphere of making government by the bureaucracy impossible.

I stop here for one moment. Critics have pounced upon this and said : 'what, you destroyers, you want to make government impossible !' We have never said anything of kind. We have said that we want to make the government by the bureaucracy

impossible. How does one thing follow from the other? We have nowhere stated that we do not want any Government. We have nowhere stated that we stand for disorder and that we want to put an end to all systems of government. All that we have said, and I shall say, all that we maintained and I still maintain, is that we will not have this government by the bureaucracy. We have said that all stand to create an atmosphere of resistance, making government by the bureaucracy impossible with a view to enforce our national claim and vindicate our national honour, and on the other hand it shall include for the said purpose all steps necessary for the gradual withdrawal of cooperation of the people of this country without which it is impossible for the bureaucracy to maintain itself. These are the two-fold aspects of the idea to Non-Cooperation. I still maintain that, whatever details of the programme we may arrange, the central idea must be that we must try to create an atmosphere of resistance in the people of this country. Resistance to what? Resistance to the bureaucratic system of the government? Can it be doubted for one moment that even today the bureaucracy carries on its government, with the consent of the people no such government is possible Therefore, if we desire to put an end to this system of bureaucratic government we must create a spirit of resistance. That is not wrong. That is not an artificial thing. That is the natural outcome of healthy life. We stand on our ownselves. And if we do not stand on our ownselves, we stand for the destruction—I use the word advisedly—of the bureaucratic institution.

Now, if you develop or gather the strength of resistance, what is your next duty? You must tell the government in plain words: 'This is my demand—it is my right to live; it is my right to govern myself; it is my right to establish a system of government which is consistent with the genius of our people —and you must be prepared to recognise that right which is undoubtedly mine, whether you realise it today or tomorrow or year after'. And we tell the government that until they recognise that clear right of ours, we do not want the government to confer that right on me. We can confer a right and seize that right and to compel the government to recognize

what they have already seized and that seizure is really possible by realization. We tell the government it is our undoubted right, as we have told the government today. And that unless they recognise their right, it would be our duty to gradually withdraw all cooperation from them with a view that it may become impossible for them to carry on this system of government— not that no government should be carried on, but this particular system of government which exists not for the good of somebody else.

These are the two broad principles upon which our programme must be based. What is your method ? It is Non-cooperation ? Well, Gentlemen, I have given you the idea. Choose your phrase. It does not matter to me whether you call it Non-cooperation or not. I am not used to Deductive Logic. 'O, is it responsive cooperation ?' they ask. I have seen wise people shake their hands and say : 'O, you are going back to responsive co-operation'. I say I am willing to come back to anything provided I see clearly before my right and I see that I can seize upon that right by following a particular method. If it is responsive cooperation, let it be so. The whole idea is this that you want to bring in old phrases to suit new facts of life. You bring in a phrase 'responsive cooperation' which was used some years back with regard to the then facts. But a new situation has been brought about in the country and people are singing with another note. And if you apply the same phrase 'responsive cooperation', well, that phrase must include this What is there in the phrase ? Call it non-cooperation, call it responsive cooperation if you want, or if you like to call it responsive non-cooperation, as my friend Mr. Kelkar who is absent today would like to call it. It does not matter to me. I say, give me the thing I want, I do not care what name you give to it.

It was two years ago, I believe, when I was speaking at Buldana. Mr. Kelkar advanced the idea that his programme was responsive non-cooperation. I said : 'Yes, it must be responsive cooperation because you put forward your demand. If the Government does not accept it, then they do not respond

to you. Then what follows is Non-cooperation.' Then Mr. Kelkar said responsive cooperation was the same thing as responsive non-cooperation. If this is so, I do not know what name you apply to it But I want to have my programme put absolutely clearly. We will not shrink from destroying any system which stands against our system. We will not shrink from telling the government that until and unless you recognise our legitimate rights, we will try to destroy your system of government, because we cannot build our system without destroying your system—not that there is a particular pleasure in destruction, but we cannot build unless we remove something which stands in our way.

I appeal to you—make no appeals to the Bureaucracy or the Secretary of State—I appeal to you, stand fast by the principle which the Swarajists have put before country. Let us act. Give us breathing time. Do not overwhelm us with criticisms and questions, I have thought and thought about it for the last twenty years of my life and now I have devoted the rest of my life to the cause of my country. Believe in me, and I tell you that, God willing, I shall not die before I have accomplished my object.

ON REFORMS*

The future constitution of India must be a Federation of the Provinces with a Central Government having residuary powers. Any settlement between England and India must proceed towards this first step, must be autonomy in all Provinces with some control in Central Government which at present might consist of a British Viceroy and a mixed British and Indian Council. But there must be some control in the Legislative Assembly the extent of which could only be discussed at a Round Table Conference. I cannot understand why British people continually harp on the question of defence when a pact is concluded as it must be soon between Britain and India. Defence arrangements would be part of

*Interview to a press representative on situation following suspension of Reforms in Bengal. *The Indian Review*, September, 1924.

that pact. Britain will naturally desire to keep a British garrison in India for sometime if only to protect British interests, but "if you make self-defence a condition of Self-Government we are prepared to take the risk." There may be a period of disorder, even serious disorder, with bloodshed but other nations have had to take the risk and India would do the same...

Our next task is to prepare the electorate and we are starting immediately to make no mistake at the next elections. All India will follow the lead of Central Provinces and Bengal. We will destroy this damn Constitution in every Province. I should like events to move more rapidly, but I am no anarchist. I believe in constitutional methods in the Provinces where we have gained our ends. We have done so strictly constitutionally that even the British High Court does not dispute that.

I have been a truer friend to constitutional progress and more against growing tendency towards anarchy than Government will believe. ...I hope Britain and India will get together presently to come to terms on lines I have mentioned, for if the Swarajist movement fails, no repression can forcibly cope with the anarchy that is sure to raise its head. Violence and disorder will reign supreme Authorities do not realise that with the failure of Swarajist movement people will lose all faith in any form of constitutional methods. When that happens that is left to them but violent anarchical revolutionary method !

ON ORDINANCE*

In supporting the resolution denouncing the Bengal Ordinance in the recent All-Parties Conference held at Bombay. Das made a speech in the course of which he said that the facts showed that the ordinary law was sufficient to deal with the criminals and there was absolutely no necessity for a special ordinance. There was a revolutionary but not an anarchical movement. So long as there was hunger for liberty in the

**The Indian Review*, December, 1924.

country and the bureaucracy attempted to suppress it by repression, revolutionary movement must exist. He continued :

"Several speakers have referred to my admissions but after I left the law-courts I have never admitted anything. I have only spoken out what I know to be the truth. I sincerely say again that there is a revolutionary party. I do not call it an anarchical party because the object is to bring about a revolution in the system of Government and to achieve Swaraj, though by means to which we object. The Swaraj Party is also a revolutionary party because it wants a peaceful revolution.

But granted that there is a revolutionary movement it does not justify repression. On the contrary, if there is a revolutionary movement the Government should hesitate long before launching on an Ordinance of this character because the past history clearly shows that its effect would be to strengthen the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary movement will go on as long as this Bureaucracy continues. You cannot suppress it. (Cheers). There are young people who are giving up their lives for freedom and how can you expect the movement to stop as long as their hunger for liberty is not satisfied ? The movement would go on as long as there are young men who are willing to give up their lives for their country. It cannot be stopped by such pious resolutions. Though violence is no remedy, human nature is human nature. I am bound to tell the truth. I have said so before and I am saying it again before you. You might call me a revolutionary but I don't care and yet I am no revolutionary. But I would not have the revolutionary party condemned alone. The Government also must be condemned at the same time. Both sides must be condemned together. I ask you to support the resolution in spite of its defects because it gives us satisfaction that of all us are united in condemning the Ordinance."

THE SWARAJIST IDEOLOGY*

Again and again has India asked, "Which way lies Salvation ?" In the dim past, it was the obstinate questioning

*Presidential address delivered at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Faridpore on 2 May, 1925.

of the individual Soul,—weary of shadows and seeking for Reality. In the living present, it is the tortured cry of the Soul of India.

Let me put this question to you again so that we may obtain a clear vision as to what it is that we must accomplish.

As with the individual, so with the Nation, the question is to find out the meaning of deliverance from bondage and, let me add, sin. It is a sin of those who forge the fetters of bondage. It is also a sin of those who allow the fetters to be forged.

Many items have been presented—Self-Government, Home Rule, Independence, and Swaraj—but these are all names unless the full implications are vividly realized and in the process of such realization must come a consideration of the method of attaining the object in view.

There are those who declare in favour of peaceful and legitimate methods. There are others who claim that, without the use of force or violence, Swaraj is impossible of attainment.

I desire to offer only a few suggestions to help you in deciding these momentous questions. Let the Bengal Provincial Conference declare in no uncertain voice what is the national ideal of freedom, and what is the method it calls upon the country to adopt for the fulfilment of that very ideal.

Independence Does not Necessarily Imply Swaraj

Independence, to my mind, is a narrower ideal than that of Swaraj. It implies, it is true, the negative of dependence ; but by itself it gives us no positive ideal. I do not for a moment suggest that independence is not consistent with Swaraj. But what is necessary is not mere independence, but the establishment of Swaraj. India may be independent to-morrow in the sense that the British people may leave us to our destiny, but that will not necessarily give us what I understand by "Swaraj". As I pointed out in my Presidential address at Gaya, India presents an interesting but a complicated problem of consolidating the many apparently conflicting elements which go

to make up the Indian people. This work of consolidation is a long process, may even be a weary process ; but without this, no Swaraj is possible. Herein lies the great wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme. . . . With that programme I entirely agree and I cannot but too strongly urge upon my countrymen to give it not merely an intellectual assent, but practical support by working it out to the fullest extent.

Independence, in the second place, does not give you that idea of order which is the essence of Swaraj. The work of consolidation which I have mentioned means the establishment of that order. But let it be clearly understood that what is sought to be established must be consistent with the genius, the temperament and the traditions of the Indian people. To my mind, Swaraj implies, firstly, that we must have the freedom of working out the consolidation of the diverse elements of the Indian people ; secondly, we must proceed with this work on National lines, not going back two thousand years ago, but going forward in the light and in the spirit of our national geuius and temperament. For instance, when I speak of order, I mean a thing which is totally different from the idea of discipline which obtains in Europe. In Europe, the foundation of society and Government is discipline ; and the spirit of discipline upon which everything rests is entirely military ; and discipline, which has made England what she is to-day, is also of the same military type. It is not for me to decry European civilization. That is their way and they must fulfil themselves. But our way is not their way and we must also fulfil ourselves. Thirdly, in the work before us, we must not be obstructed by any foreign power.

What then have we to fix upon in the matter of ideal is what I call Swaraj, and not mere independence, which may be the negation of Swaraj. When we are asked as to what is our national ideal of freedom, the only answer which is possible to give is Swaraj. I do not like either Home Rule or Self-Government. Possibly they come within what I have described as Swaraj. But my culture, somehow or other, is antagonistic to the word "rule"—be it Home Rule or Foreign Rule. My

objection to the word Self-Government is exactly the same. If it is defined as government by self and for self, my objection may be met; but, in that case, Swaraj includes all those elements.

Within or Without the Empire ?

Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realized within the Empire or outside it ? The answer which the Congress has always given is "within the Empire, if the Empire will recognize our rights", and "outside the Empire", if it does not. We must have opportunity to live our life,— opportunity for self-realization, self-development, and self-fulfilment. The question is of living our life. If the Empire furnishes sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred. If, on the contrary, the Empire, like the Car of Jagannath, crushes our life in the sweep of its imperialistic march, there will be justification for the idea of the establishment of Swaraj outside the Empire.

Indeed, the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion status to-day is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation. Before the War, a separatist tendency was growing up in several parts of the Empire, but after the War it is generally believed that it is only as a great confederation, that the Empire or its component parts can live. It is realized that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation, and the Dominion status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself, and therefore it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

To me, the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace, in the ultimate

federation of the world. I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led by wise statesmen at the helm, is bound to make lasting contributions to the great problem,—the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. For the development of the idea involves apparent sacrifice on the part of the constituent nations, and it certainly involves the giving up for good the Empire idea with its ugly attribute of domination. I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the Commonwealth, and so serve the cause of humanity.

The Method : The Case Against Violence

I now come to the question of method. In my judgment, the method is always a part of the ideal. So that, when we are considering the question of method, we cannot forget the larger aspect of the object we have in view.

Viewed in this light, the method of violence is hardly in keeping with our life and culture. I am not suggesting for a moment that the history of India shows no wars, nor the application of violence. Every superficial student of our history knows that it is not so. But sometimes things are forced upon our life which a critical student of our history must know how to separate from the real bent of our genius. Violence is not a part of our being, as it is of Europe. That violence in Europe is checked by a system of law, which in the ultimate resort, is also based on physical force. The Indian people has always been in the habit of following traditions and customs and thus keeping itself free from violent methods. Our village organizations were a marvel of non-violent activities. Our institutions have always grown naturally like the unfolding of a flower. Strifes there have been of the intellect ; cravings there have been of the Soul : disputes and quarrels have always arisen but only to be settled by peaceful arbitration. Anything contrary or antagonistic to this temperament, is a method which is not only immoral from the highest stand-

point, but is bound to fail. I have no hesitation in proclaiming my conviction that our freedom will never be won by revolutionary violence. In the next place, apart from the special psychology of the Indian mind, how is it possible, by offering such violence, as it is possible for a subject race to offer, to contend against the highly organized governmental violence of the present day ? It is no use quoting the incidents of the French and other Revolutions. Those were days when the people fought with spikes and often won. Is it conceivable that at the present moment we can overthrow any organized Government of the modern type by such method ? I venture to think that any such armed revolution would be impossible even in England to-day.

In the next place, the application of violence cuts at the root of that consolidation, without which, as I have said, the attainment of Swaraj is impossible. Violence is sure to be followed by more violence on the part of the Government, and repression may be so violent, that its only effect on the Indian people would be to check their enthusiasm for Swaraj. I ask those young men who are addicted to revolutionary methods : do they think that the people will side with them ? When life and property is threatened, the inevitable result is, that the people who suffer or who think they may suffer, recoil from such activities. This method therefore is impractical. Far be it from me to say one word against the honesty of purpose or the ardour of patriotism which these young men are capable of showing. But, as I said, the method is unsuited to our temperament ; therefore, the application of it is, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "waste of time and energy". I appeal to the young men of Bengal who may even in their heart of hearts think in favour of violent methods, to desist from such thought, and, I appeal to the Bengal Provincial Conference to declare clearly and unequivocally, that in its opinion freedom cannot be achieved by such methods.

But if I am against the application of such methods, I feel bound to point out that it is the violence of the Government which has to a great extent helped the revolutionary movement in Bengal. I believe it is Professor Dicey who points out that

for the last thirty years there has been a singular decline among modern Englishmen in their respect or reverence for law and order, and he shows that this result is directly traceable to modern legislation, which has had the effect of diminishing the authority of the law courts, and thereby imperilling the rule of law. In other words, violence always begets violence, and if the Government embarks on a career of lawlessness for the purpose of stifling legitimate activities, it cannot but bring into existence, what Dicey calls, "a zeal for lawlessness" in the subject. The history of India, and particularly of Bengal, supports the observation of Professor Dicey.*

The Injustice of the Ordinance

The new Ordinance Act is a misguided attempt to perpetrate violence upon the people. The whole of India has with one voice condemned it, and I cannot trust myself to express my feeling about it in fitting terms, as I desire to speak with all restraint. I shall content myself by saying that I unhesitatingly condemn it, and I have given the only answer which it is possible for any Indian to give to the recent speech of Lord Birkenhead inviting me to co-operate with the Government in its repressive policy.

You will remember that Lord Birkenhead said that the Ordinance has not hurt anybody but the criminals. May I point out that His Lordship here is begging the whole question? We deny that the men imprisoned under the Ordinance are criminals and the only way to decide as to whether they are criminals or not is to hold an open trial and proceed, not on secret information, but on actual evidence which might be tested in open Court. The insecurity to which eminent writers of Constitutional history in England have

*After this Chitta Ranjan Das went on to trace the origin and development of revolutionary activities in Bengal and gave a complete chronology of the leading events in India which occurred from 1905-1924.

referred is the insecurity to the public by the attempt of the Executive to arrogate to itself the position of a Court of Law.

I will not weary you by dealing with each particular case which has been brought forward by the Government as a justification for the policy of repression. . . . I must also point out that it is difficult to believe in the statement put forward in support of the repressive measures by the Government. I shall quote only one instance and I have done. Speaking of the arrest and detention of the nine Bengali gentlemen, including Srijut Krishna Kumar Mitra and the late Aswini Kumar Dutt on December 11th, 1908, Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State, in his letter to Lord Minto stated as follows :

"You have nine men locked up a year ago by lettre de cachet because you believed them to be criminally connected. . . . with these plots."

But let us hear what Sir Hugh Stephenson has to say on the point. It was only the other day that he said from his place in the Bengal Council :

"I should like to mention three cases which have been used in the press to throw doubts on the efficiency, if not on the bonafides of our methods. The first two are those of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt and Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra. It has been said, that no one will believe that they had anything to do with terrorist crime and that, therefore, the secret information of the police must have been false, and Government may equally well be deceived by such false information now. I never knew Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, but I am glad to think that Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra is a personal friend, and I entirely acquit him of sympathy with terrorist crime. But as far as I know none has ever accused him or Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt of promoting crime, still less of taking part in it. The Bengal Government asked for the use of Regulation III in the case of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt because of his whirlwind campaign of anti-Government speeches."

"Repression the Most Violent form of Violence"

It follows conclusively that the discretionary power which the Government in this country enjoys of promulgating illegal laws is capable of being abused. Indeed, it must be so from the very nature of things. The history of the world shows that bureaucratic governments have always tried to consolidate their power through the process of "Law and Order" which is an excellent phrase, but which means, in countries where the rule of law does not prevail, the exercise by persons in authority of wide arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint.

Repression is a process in the consolidation of arbitrary powers—and I condemn the violence of the Government—for repression is the most violent form of violence—just as I condemn violence as a method of winning political liberty. I must warn the Government that the policy of repression is a short-sighted policy. It may strengthen its hands for the time being, but I am sure Lord Birkenhead realizes that, as an instrument of Government, it is bound to fail.

No Co-operation in an Atmosphere of Distrust

I have so far dealt with the question of method in order to show that violence is both immoral and inexpedient,—immoral, because it is not in keeping with our life and culture ; inexpedient, because it is inconceivable that at the present day we can overthrow any organized Government by bombs and revolvers. Then the question arises what method should we pursue in order to win Swaraj ? We have been gravely told that Swaraj is within our grasp if only we co-operate with the Government in working the present Reform Act. With regard to the argument, my position is perfectly clear, and I should like to restate it, so that there may be no controversy about it. If I were satisfied that the present Act has transferred any real responsibility to the people,—that there is opportunity for self-realization, self development and self-fulfilment under the Act, I would unhesitatingly co-operate with the Government and begin the constructive work within the Council Chamber. But I am not willing to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. I

will not detain you to-day with any argument tending to show that the Reform Act has not transferred any responsibility to the people. I have dealt with the question exhaustively in my address at the Ahmedabad Congress, and if further arguments are necessary they will be found in the evidence given before the Muddiman Committee by men whose moderation cannot be questioned by the Government. The basis of the present Act is distrust of the Ministers ; and there can be no talk of co-operation in an atmosphere of distrust. At the same time, I must make clear my position—and I hope of the Bengal Provincial Conference—that, provided some real responsibility is transferred to the people, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with the Government. But to make such co-operation real and effective, two things are necessary. First, there should be a real change of heart in our rulers ; secondly, Swaraj in the fullest sense must be guaranteed to us at once, to come automatically in the near future. I have always maintained that we should make large sacrifices in order to have the opportunity to begin our constructive work at once ; and I think you will realize that a few years are nothing in the history of a nation, provided the foundation of Swaraj is laid at once and there is a real change of heart both in the rulers and in the subject. You will tell me that "change of heart" is a fine phrase, and that some practical demonstration should be given of that change. I agree. But the demonstration must necessarily depend on the atmosphere created by any proposed settlement. An atmosphere of trust or distrust may be easily felt, and in any matter of peaceful settlement a great deal more depends on the spirit behind the terms than the actual terms themselves. It is impossible to lay down the exact terms of any such settlement at the present moment ; but if a change of heart takes place and negotiations are carried on by both sides in the spirit of peace, harmony and mutual trust, such terms are capable of precise definition.

Offers to the Government

A few suggestions may, however, be made, having regard to what is nearest to the hearts of the people of Bengal.

In the first place, the Government should divest itself of its wide discretionary powers of constraint, and follow it up by proc aiming a general amnesty of all political prisoners. In the next place, the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the commonwealth, in the near future, and in the meantime, till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole, but also between the different communities, not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities, as I said in my presidential speech at Gaya.

The Time for Civil Disobedience

I must also add that we, on our part, should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word, deed or gesture, encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement. This undertaking is not needed, for the Bengal Provincial Conference has never identified itself with the revolutionary propaganda. I believe that, with a change of heart on the part of the Government, there is bound to be produced a change in the mental outlook of the revolutionary; and with a settlement such as I have described, the revolutionary movement will be a thing of the past, and the very power and energy which is now directed against the Government will be devoted to the real service of the people.

If, however, our offer of a settlement should not meet with any response, we must go on with our national work on the lines which we have pursued for the last two years so that it may become impossible for the Government to carry on the administration of the country, except by the exercise of its exceptional powers. There are some who shrink from this step, who point out with perfect logic that we have no right to refuse supplies unless we are prepared to go to the country and advise the subject not to pay the taxes. My answer is that I want to create the atmosphere for national civil disobedience, which must be the last weapon in the hands of the people

striving for freedom. I have no use for historical precedent ; but if reference is to be made to English history in our present struggle, I may point out that refusal to pay taxes in England in the time of the Stuarts came many years after the determination of the Parliament to refuse supplies. The atmosphere for civil disobedience is created by compelling the Government to raise money by the exercise of its exceptional powers ; and when the time comes we shall not hesitate to advise our countrymen not to pay taxes which are sought to be raised by the exercise of the exceptional powers vested in the Government.

I hope that time will never come—indeed I see signs of a real change of heart everywhere—but let us face the fact that it may be necessary for us to have recourse to civil disobedience if all hope of reconcilation fails. But let us also face the fact that civil disobedience requires a high stage of organization, an infinite capacity for sacrifice, and a real desire to subordinate personal and communal interest to the common interest of the nation ; and I can see little hope of India ever being ready for civil disobedience until she is prepared to work Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme to the fullest extent. The end, however, must be kept in view, for freedom must be won.

The Goal

But, as I have said, I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts, and I think I see a real desire for construction, for consolidation. I believe that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver, and she is anxious to deliver it in the Council Chamber of that great commonwealth of nations, of which I have spoken. Will British statesmen rise to the occasion ? To them I say : you can have peace to-day on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. To the British community in India, I say : you have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to co-operate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognize your right to be heard in the final settlement. To the people of Bengal I say : you

have made great sacrifices for daring to win political freedom, and on you has fallen the brunt of official wrath. The time is not yet for putting aside your political weapons. Fight hard, but fight clean ; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, enter the peace conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity.

Nationalism is merely a process in self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment. It is not an end in itself. The growth and development of nationalism is necessary, so that humanity may realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself ; and I beseech you when you discuss the terms of settlement, do not forget the larger claim of humanity in your pride of nationalism. For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek. I seek a federation of the states of India—each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people : each bound to each in the common service of all : a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth.

ACHIEVEMENTS, FAILURES AND UNREALIZED DREAMS*

Chitta Ranjan was a visionary, a dreamer, and an apostle of revolt. Yet, in practical politics, he suffered many things and refused to move onwards in many matters. He had little sympathy with existing conventions of life or social or political institutions of any kind. In his private and domestic life, he was as strong a destroyer of social usages and conventions as he had constituted himself in the last years of his life, an enemy of the Government established by law. Though born of Brahmo parents, he treated lightly certain cherished ideals and conventions that the Brahmo Samaj held dear and sacred.

*From P.C. Ray's *The Life and Times of C.R. Das*, Chapter XVII.

As we have noticed in a previous chapter, he wrote and published several poems in which he defied the orthodox cult of Brahmo theism and puritanism. In his habits of life he had marked out for himself new principles and laws of conduct. In a later period of his life, he returned to Hindu orthodoxy, but had cast to the winds its principal corner-stone—the caste system. Against the fundamental Hindu usage of marrying within one's own caste, he had married both his daughters to bridegrooms chosen from castes other than his own; and he got neither of these marriages registered, taking upon himself the risk of their validity being challenged in a Court of Law. Yet, in the *Sradh* ceremony of his parents and in his daughters' marriages, he had followed Hindu ritual to the latter. In fact, when he grew to mature age, he neither remained a Brahmo nor became a Hindu, according to the current and accepted interpretation of the term.

He lived like a prince during the better part of his life, indulging in epicurean habits to the full; but when he turned his back upon this chapter of his life, he renounced them as probably no one in modern India has done. Even before he had turned over this new leaf, in his laborious days he had given away in charities, mostly indiscriminate, what he had earned by the sweat of his brow. Though living in the midst of a materialistic age he never acquired a love for money except as a mere instrument for the demonstration of his altruistic instincts.

Through all the various stages of his life, revolt marked him as his own; and he went on breaking with the zeal of an iconoclast all images and fetishes that came in his way, no matter whether religious, social or political. He represented in all his life and ideas the spirit of revolt, and of Prometheus unbound; and, when he became the evangelist of Indian traditionalism, he did so, not with a view to paying homage and worship to the ideas of a bygone and remote past, but with a view to breaking away from the bondage of the present, and demolishing the gods, fashions, and conventions of modern life. We have no doubt in our mind that he renounced his splendid practice at the Bar, not from the spirit of mere

sacrifice, as he never loved money for money's sake, nor to make himself an example to others, but to turn his back on the beaten track of the law, which he had never regarded as a noble or inspiring profession.

In politics, he was not in love with any form of bureaucracy ; nor had he much love for Western Parliamentary institutions either. He was a democrat, but he did not subscribe to the main shibboleths of modern democracies, and his whole temperament, by nature and training, was that of a great autocrat who could bear no criticism nor forgive anyone who challenged his authority and position. He was a Vaishnav by spiritual affinity and culture, but he did not believe in the cult of static calm or spiritual resignation which is the very essence of Vaishnavism. He was a socialist, particularly in his academic sympathy with Marxian doctrines ; but he did not move even his little finger to destroy the permanent settlement of Bengal, a pernicious institution which has for nearly a century and a half stood effectively between Bengal and progress. Nor in his coquettings with Trade Unions, could he rise above capitalistic influences and go in for a wholesale scheme of better conditions of life for labouring classes, or for any scheme to put down sweated labour and sweated wages.

Chitta Ranjan had given his attention to journalism at various stages of his life, but not until his retirement from the Bar did he become a full-fledged editor of a newspaper. Just a few days before the general election of 1923, he had started *Forward* as the daily organ of his party. As the editor of this journal he was eminently successful in organizing the public opinion of Bengal in support of his own doctrines and ideals. As a propagandist journal, *Forward* more than fulfilled the expectations and hopes of its founder, yet it cannot be said that it ever attained the high standard and reputation which such journals as the *Dandhya*, the *Yugantar*, the *Atmasakti* and the *Bande Mataram* had succeeded in establishing for themselves nearly twenty years before as the messengers of the fiery cross to young Bengal. But perhaps the times were different and he was not the absolute master in his own house.

Though he was gifted in a very high measure with the powers of persuasion, he failed to reach the first rank of public speakers of Young India. Keshab Chandra Sen, Lal Mohan Ghose, Kali Churn Banurji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Banerjea might well be reckoned as heroes of a hundred platforms, and could any day hold their own against English or American orators of the front rank of this and the last century. Chitta Ranjan certainly spoke very well and with an earnestness and candour that almost bewitched his audience, but his oratory lacked the classical dignity and the rounded periods with which the eloquence of Burke and Chatham are associated on the one side, as well as the terse condensation, directness. and the simple phraseology of a Lord Rosebery or a Joseph Chamberlain on the other.

Intellectually he exhibited in all his later public activities an extraordinary subtlety and nimbleness, but he failed to apply his splendid gifts to any work of enduring good or benefit to his country. He had practically abandoned his devotion to literature as soon as he became a busy lawyer, and had ceased to contribute articles to the newspapers and reviews as he had done as a free lance in the days of the *Bande Mataram*. Towards renaissance and spirituality in India he contributed very little to which subsequent generations of Indians may look for inspiration. In this matter probably, Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose's contributions will be worked in the future for valuable ore. Chitta Ranjan's whole time, from the date on which he suspended his practice in the Bar to the last day of his life, was absorbed in the task of laying truly and faithfully the foundation of his party and keeping his flock together. He had little leisure to think of leaving behind him anything in the nature of a permanent landmark in art, politics, philosophy, or literature.

He was so impatient a reformer and so obsessed with an enthusiasm for destruction that he did not even shrink in 1921 from wrecking several hundreds of schools in Bengal, on the plea that they were training and preparing our young men for a life of clerical serfdom. But when he tried to establish an independent University at Dacca, and several schools all over

Bengal for the propagation of what is known as "national education", his efforts met with conspicuous failure, and by 1922-23 the older schools which he had destroyed were again full and busy. A few days before his death he told a friend that "national education was un-realizable without a national system of Government, and the boycott of the University was about the weakest point in the new national propaganda." How thousands of young men, whose careers were wrecked by his inconsiderate zeal, wish to-day that he had awakened to this reality before he had set out on his work of destruction !

Even in his short career as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, he stood out more as an apostle of destruction than as a respecter of persons and institutions. No doubt, he scotched dyarchy, but he was unable to put anything in its place. Not that he did not want to but he could not. And as a result he remained a destroyer, and could not become a builder, try as he might.

In his last speech to the Bengal Legislative Council he said :

"My answer to those who ask why I want to destroy is this : I want to destroy because this rotten structure is occupying the place where a beautiful mansion may be erected. May I ask how you can put up a beautiful building without pulling down the rotten structure which had already occupied the place ? You cannot. Therefore there is no sense in that criticism, destruction ! destruction ! We do not want to destroy merely. It is a gross libel on the Swarajist members to say that we want only to destroy. We want to destroy in order that we may be able to build up. If we want to obstruct, it is because we may get the opportunity of constructing. It is to my mind a principle as simple as it can be. Why is it so difficult for my friends to realize it ? I cannot make out. Why ! Look at the history of any country ; look at the history of England ! This sort of thing has gone on there and no power has come to the people without this obstruction. It is a wicked and pernicious system. One thing was good for England because it brought freedom for the

English people, but that very thing is bad in this country because it is the wicked Swarajists who apply it."

He completed his work of destruction, but did not live to see any work of construction seriously undertaken, nor could he lay the foundation of the "beautiful mansion" he had in mind. He made a bold attempt to raise a large sum of money for village reconstruction—to spread sanitation, supply pure drinking water, distribute free medicine and establish primary schools in rural areas. Unfortunately he failed to realize sufficient funds for the purpose, and, before his schemes could be put through, the hand of death had fallen on him. It must, however, be noticed here, that, as the head of the civic administration in Calcutta for nearly a year, he was able to induce the Corporation to establish primary schools, a good hospital and medical school at the eastern end of the city, and several health associations and depots in different quarters for the treatment of cholera, small-pox, malaria and kala-azar.*

Nor as a visionary did Chitta Ranjan confine his mental outlook to a mere reconstruction of Indian life. He cast his eyes on the world abroad and conceived the idea of a Federation of Asia. In his inaugural address at Gaya, as the President of the Congress, he said :

"Even more important is the participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation, which I see in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement, which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic peoples. It is the union of the oppressed nationalities of Asia. Is India to remain outside this union ? I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world, is destined to bring about world-peace. World-peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation on

*Scarlet fever.

the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage."

All his life, before he was recognized as the stormy petrel of Indian unrest, he had cherished beautiful illusions, been obsessed with wonderful visions, and dreamt inspiring dreams. The solidarity of the Indian nation, based on a permanent Hindu-Moslem understanding, of which he had given an earnest of his enthusiasm in the famous Pact of December, 1923, and the Federation of Asia remained to his last day unrealized dreams.

While not believing in any particular faith in his latter days, he rose above the sordid spirit of religiosity and communalism. He became a transcendentalist, and, like Abu'l Fazl, he entered into the spirit of universal religious tolerance. Three centuries ago, in an inscription on a temple in Kashmir, Abu'l Fazl wrote thus :

"Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy ; for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth.

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox ; but the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller."

Inspired by a sentiment of this nature, Chitta Ranjan made some very serious attempts in his life, including the Pact of December, 1923, to prove to both these communities that a change of heart was necessary for them to make a united India possible. Unfortunately for India, his dream never materialized, and, before twelve months had passed after his death, his famous Bengal Pact was abandoned both by the Hindus and by the Mahomedans as a mere scrap of paper.

As regards the Federation of India, he could cherish it as a mere intellectual vision, the ultimate realization of which could not, and did not, enter into practical politics during his lifetime. In his last public utterance at Faridpore, he gave

expression to his ideas on an Indian Federation in the following manner :—

"For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek. I seek a federation of the states of India : each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people : each bound to each in the common service of all : a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth."

But neither in his address at Faridpore nor in any other public utterance do we find Chitta Ranjan thrashing out this question at any length. Nowhere in his public speeches do we come across any programme for the construction of an eastern structure for the Indian Commonwealth in consonance with the aspirations of the people in British India on the one side, and the security of the Indian principalities on the other. Nor do we find him anywhere offering any helpful criticism on the two schemes which had been placed before the country on this subject during his lifetime. Mr. Lionel Curtis's idea of building up a Federal Commonwealth in this ountry on the model of the United States, by dividing India into a large number of small, homogeneous, and autonomous provinces, at one time came perilously near to practical politics. At a later stage, Major Lugard's scheme of parcelling out India into a large number of independent and sovereign states under well-chosen Indian governors, or in other words, the extension of the system of tributary principalities throughout the country, engaged public attention seriously both in this country and England.*

The Federation of Man as a social Utopia never captured Chitta Ranjan's imagination, and, at one time he even stood out as a parochial advocate of patriotism, as against the more

*Yet another scheme of Federalism has been promulgated by Sir Frederick Whyte, the first President of the Central Legislative Assembly, since C.R. Das's death.

sublime dogma of an international brotherhood. On this point he once crossed swords with Rabindra Nath Tagore, who had soared to the higher plane of looking at man as a limb and part of the Universal Soul. Chitta Ranjan absolutely lacked the idea of cosmic consciousness and the sense of cosmic solidarity with which the vision of the human race had been widened by the *rishis* of old in ancient India and by seers like Emerson, Walt Whitman, Wordsworth and Tennyson in the West.

Chitta Ranjan's failures and lapses were many, but some of his achievements were striking and he will long live in memory as the man who first gave check to a powerful government like the British, and as a wonderful magician who in the space of a few years changed and broadened the entire political and intellectual outlook of the Bengali people. He not only scotched dyarchy, in spite of the best efforts of the Government to retain and work it out, but he also succeeded in tearing to tatters all the prestige and authority that the Anglo-Indian government had acquired in the two centuries since Robert Clive laid the foundation of England's Empire in the East. He lived to turn the old acquiescence and the placid contentment of the people into a feeling of bitter dislike and hatred of the powers that be. In this endeavour he was not only a destroyer but also a builder, as he lived to organize the most powerful school of political opinion in the country, and made it such a great power in the land that all ambitious men, no matter what their social rank, looked to him and his party for influence and patronage, rather than to Government House, to which so many generations of Indians had turned for all sorts of personal and social recognition.

Taking everything together, Chitta Ranjan's memory will be cherished by his grateful countrymen as that of a builder rather than a destroyer. When he entered Indian politics, he found political ideals and parties in a most nebulous and chaotic condition. The masses generally, and a large portion of the classes, were still sleeping in the long

night of mediaeval mysticism and inaction. Chitta Ranjan whipped up his people from this deep somnolence, brought them face to face with the gravity of their condition, and awakened them to a consciousness of nationhood. He worked day and night for a few years, spent laborious days and sleepless nights, and left behind him a party which, for the first time in the history of India, knows its mind and can gather courage enough to follow its convictions. This will remain the principal landmark of his political work—a whole people brought under a common standard, inspired by ideals of self-help and determination, and set to work out their own destiny without any extraneous aid or help.

At the same time, as a constructive politician or statesman he fell far behind Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhoy Naoroji or Pheroze Shah Mehta, while in astuteness he was no equal to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. But in his immense sacrifice for political idealism, in risking health and life for the organization of a new political party, and in integrity, doggedness and tenacity of purpose, Chitta Ranjan had no equal in India, and even Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, with all his brilliant talents and patriotic devotion, is not to be compared with him And for moving masses and leading them on from stage to stage, from victory to victory, as a great general, the wizard of Bengal left far behind the prophet and high priest of Young India.

In one very pleasing aspect of his life, Chitta Ranjan bore a striking resemblance to another distinguished Bengali of his day. Like Bhupendra Nath Basu he had great social qualities and had the wonderful power of making friends with all sorts and conditions of people, and turning a large number of politically minded men into loyal and faithful friends Like Bhupendra Nath Basu again, he was able to keep and hold them together as no other contemporary Bengali had done by his wonderful tact, sweetness of temper and reliance on the loyalty and integrity of his lieutenants. But unlike Bhupendra Nath Basu and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he failed to gather round him many intellectual men and sometimes even repelled them ; and also unlike

Bhupendra Nath and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he had not the shrewdness to know sincere workers and friends from parasites and flatterers. So long as he was in the saddle things were all right. But as soon as he passed away the flatterers and parasites got the better of the party machine and organization and the real and sincere workers were elbowed and crowded out of public life.

With Surendra Nath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale Chitta Ranjan had three things in common. All of them took politics very seriously, almost raising it to the level of a religion, all of them were extremely sensitive to criticism, so much so that not one of them would speak to a man who would not recognize his authority and bow to his decision ; and, above all, all these three men were supremely innocent of a sense of humour.

It is now necessary to compare this great Bengali with the leaders of the other national movements of our own times in other parts of the world.

There can be no doubt that in powers of organization and in giving obstruction a scientific orientation, in the abundant and diplomatic use of barbed shafts, and for adroitness, he resembled in a great measure Charles Steward Parnell. With Michael Collins he had little in common, excepting that they were both good generals and clever masters of strategy ; yet in generalship and powers of organization he could not come near to either Kemal or Zaghlul Pasha Kemal and Zaghlul have made Turkey and Egypt what they are to-day ; Chitta Ranjan spent himself in the barest spade-work. But it must be said for Chitta Ranjan that he had not the opportunities of life of either a Kemal or a Zaghlul. Zaghlul and Kemal both had a united, homogeneous and independent nation behind them. Chitta Ranjan had none of these opportunities. Yet he seems to have achieved more than either of them by welding heterogeneous groups of people into a united nation and knitting together hundreds of impatient idealists, political adventurers, and ambitious self-seekers into a well-disciplined party.

With the last leader of the Progressive Party in the United States who also died in June, 1925, Chitta Ranjan had almost a family affinity. Chitta Ranjan, like La Follette, "was gritty and combative, voluble, untiring, abounding in information, terrific in attack, and absolutely fearless."

A very common charge levelled against Chitta Ranjan during his lifetime. particularly by Anglo-Indian critics, was that he very often stirred up excitement which he could not lay or control. It is a strange coincidence in human history that such a charge has been levelled against almost every great man in all ages, climes and countries. A similar charge was brought against Gladstone by his political critics, and Lord Morley's refutation of it applies almost with equal force in the case of Chitta Ranjan. In defending this aspect of Gladstone's life, Morley says :*

"To charge him with habitually rousing popular forces into dangerous excitement, is to ignore or mis-read his action in some of the most critical of his movements. 'Here is a man', said Huxley, 'with the greatest intellect in Europe, and yet he debases it by simply following majorities and the crowd.' He was called a mere mirror of the passing humours and intellectual confusions of the popular mind. He had nothing, said his detractors, but a sort of clever pilot's eye for winds and currents and the rising of the tide to the exact height that would float him and his cargo over the bar. All this is the exact opposite of the truth. What he thought was that the statesman's gift consisted in insight into the facts of a particular era, disclosing the existence of material for forming public opinion and directing public opinion to a given purpose. In every one of his achievements of high mark—even in his last marked failure of achievement—he expressly formed, or endeavoured to form and create, the public opinion upon which he knew that in the last resort he must depend."

After he had overthrown dyarchy for a second time, the bitterness of the Government and the Anglo-Indian Press

*Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. 3.

against him reached its climax. The Serajgunge Resolution, extolling the patriotism of a political assassin, was seized on by Chitta Ranjan's political enemies as an opportunity to crush his growing influence in the country, and brought down upon him the wrath of India's white rulers on both sides of the Suez Canal. At this time Lord Peel, a previous Secretary of State for India, was egging on the MacDonald Government to prosecute Chitta Ranjan Das for the part he had taken in the Serajgunge Resolution, which was interpreted as nothing short of incitement to murder. In declining to put Chitta Ranjan on trial or deport him, Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India in the Labour Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, gave a remarkable testimony to the character of Chitta Ranjan on the authority of the Governor of Bengal. Lord Lytton had informed Lord Olivier that "Mr. Das in India had the reputation of being a particularly upright and scrupulous politician, second only to Gandhi himself in saintliness of character."

This statement, made on the floor of the House of Lords, caused considerable surprise, and evoked scornful comments both in India and England, and was described in some quarters as extraordinarily "wide of the mark." It was openly stated that a man who in his youth was a *bon viveur* and lavish with his money, and unscrupulous in his political methods, who had publicly declared that all means, no matter what, would always justify the end, was hardly a person who could be described in the language that Lord Olivier had used. Chitta Ranjan's political honesty and integrity of purpose may not have been as transparent as those of Mr. Gandhi, but we have no doubt that after coming into close personal contact with the Saint of Sabarmati, he did his best to reach a higher moral and spiritual plane, and, after 1924, he made a supreme effort to justify Lord Olivier's description of his character.

Through renunciation and sacrifice in the later years of his life, he had elevated his emotionalism into a spiritual force, and had touched the right chord in the very soul of India, which has been, and still remains, more spiritual than material. Rabindra Nath Tagore has summed up the life work of this great Bengali in the following beautiful message :

"Man truly reveals himself through his gift, and the best gift that Chitta Ranjan has left for his country-men is not any particular political or social programme, but the creative force of a great aspiration that has taken a deathless form in the sacrifice which his life represented."

MAHATMA GANDHI'S TRIBUTE*

Calcutta demonstrated yesterday the hold Deshbandhu had on Bengal, nay, India. Calcutta is like Bombay, cosmopolitan. It has people from all the provinces. And all these people were as hearty participators in the procession as the Bengalis. The wires that were pouring in from every part of India emphasize the fact of bis all-India popularity.

It could not well be otherwise among a people known for their gratefulness. And he deserved it all. His sacrifice was great. His generosity had no bounds. His loving hand was opened out to all. He was reckless in his charities. And only the other day, when I gently remarked that he might have been discriminate, prompt came the reply, 'I do not think I have lost by my indiscrimination'. His board was free to the prince and pauper. His heart went out to everyone in distress. Where is the young man in all Bengal, who does not owe a debt of gratitude to the Deshbandhu in some shape or other. His unrivalled legal talents were also at the disposal of the poor. I understand that he defended many political prisoners without charging them a pie. He went to the Punjab for the Punjab inquiry and paid his own expenses. He carried a princely household. I had it from him that he spent during that stay in the Punjab Rs. 50,000. This large-heartedness towards all who

*Gandhi's article "Long Live Deshbandhu" in *Forward* (an organ of the Swaraj Party published from Calcutta), dated 20 June, 1925.

Gandhi wrote a few lines on the great bereavement on June 17. ' When the heart feels a deep cut, the pen refuses to move. I am too much in centre of grief to be able to send much for the readers of *Young India* across the wire. The five days of communion with the great patriot which I had at Darjeeling, brought us nearer to each other than we were ever before. I realized not only how great Deshbandhu was, but also how good he was. India has lost a jewel. But we must regain it by gaining swaraj."

sought his help made him the undisputed ruler of thousands of young hearts.

He was as fearless as he was generous. His stormy speeches at Amritsar took my breath away. He wanted immediate deliverance for his country. He would not brook the alteration or removal of an adjective—not because he was unreasonable, but because he loved his country so well. He gave his life for it. He controlled enormous forces. He brought power to his party by his indomitable zeal and perseverance. But this tremendous outpuring of energy cost him his life. It was a willing sacrifice. It was noble.

Faridpur was his crowning triumph. That utterance of his is a demonstration of his supreme reasonableness and statesmanship. It was a deliberate, unequivocal and for him—as he said to me—the final acceptance of non-violence as the only policy and, therefore, political creed for India.

In constructing with Pandit Motilal Nehru and the disciplined stalwarts from Maharashtra the great and growing Swaraj Party out of nothing, he showed his determination, originality, resourcefulness and concept of consequences, after he had once made up his mind that the thing to be done was right. And today the Swaraj Party is a compact well-disciplined organization. My differences about the council-entry were and are fundamental, but I never doubted the usefulness of council-entry for the purpose of embarrassment and continuously putting the Government in the wrong. No one can deny the greatness of the work done by the party in the councils. And the credit for it must predominantly belong to Deshbandhu. I entered into the pact with him with my eyes open. I have since done my little best to help the party. His death renders it doubly my duty to stand by the Swaraj Party now when the leader is gone. I shall do nothing to impede its progress where I may not be able to help.

But I must hark back to the Faridpur speech. The nation will appreciate the courtesy of the acting Viceroy in sending a message of condolence to Shrimati Basanti Devi. I note with

gratefulness the warm tributes paid by the Anglo-Indian press to the memory of the deceased. The Faridpur speech seems to have impressed most Englishmen with its transparent sincerity. I am anxious that this death should not end with a mere display of courtesy. The Faridpur speech had a great purpose behind it. It was a generous response to the Anglo-Indian friends who were anxious for the great patriot to make his position clear and make the first approach. He made it. The cruel hand of death has removed the author of the gesture from our midst. But I would like to assure Englishmen who may be still doubtful about the sincerity of Deshbandhu's motive, that throughout my stay in Darjeeling, the one thing that struck me most was his utter sincerity about that utterance. Cannot this glorious death be utilized to heal wounds and forget distrust ? I make a simple suggestion. Will the Government in honour of the memory of Chittaranjan Das, who is no longer with us to plead the cause, release the political prisoners who he protested were innocent ? I am not now asking for their discharge on the ground of innocence. The Government may have the best proof of guilt. I simply ask for their discharge as a tribute to the deceased and without prejudice. If the Government mean to do anything to placate Indian opinion, there can be no more opportune time and no better inauguration of a favourable atmosphere than the release of these prisoners. I have travelled practically all over Bengal. Public feeling, not all necessarily Swarajists, is very sore on the point. May the fire that burnt yesterday the perishable part of Deshbandhu Das, also burn the perishable distrust, suspicion and fear. The Government may then call a conference, if they will, to consider the means of meeting Indian demand whatever it may be.

But we will have to do our part, if the Government are to do theirs. We must be able to show that we are no one-man show. In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, uttered at the time of the war, we must be able to say, 'Business as usual'. The Swaraj Party must be immediately reconstructed. Even the Punjab Hindus and Musalmans appear to have forgotten their quarrels in the face of this 'bolt from the blue'. Can both the parties feel strong and sensible enough to close

the ranks ? Deshbandhu was a believer in and lover of Hindu-Muslim unity. He held the Hindus and Musalmans together under the most trying circumstances. Can the funeral fire purge us of our disunion ? Perhaps the prelude to it is a meeting of all the parties on a common platform. Deshbandhu was anxious for it. He could be bitter in speaking of his opponents. But during my stay in Darjeeling, I do not remember a harsh word having escaped his lips about a single political opponent. He wanted me to help to bring all parties together. It is then for us educated Indians to give effect to the visions of Deshbandhu and realize the one ambition of his life by immediately rising a few steps in the ladder of swaraj even if we may not rise to the top just yet. Then may we cry from the bottom of our hearts : 'Deshbandhu is dead. Long live Deshbandhu'."

Bengal is like a widow today. I felt forlorn when cruel fate snatched away Lokamanya from us. I have not yet got over this shock, for I am yet wooing his beloved disciples. But Deshbandhu's withdrawal leaves me in a worse plight. For when the Lokamanya left us the country was full of hopes. Hindus and Musalmans appeared to be united forever. We are on the eve of battle. Now ?"

5

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

[Reverentially called 'Netaji' (Respected Leader), Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) has a unique place in the history of Indian freedom movement.* So deep was his love for the motherland that in May, 1921 he resigned from the Indian Civil Service and threw himself into the freedom struggle. By nature he was a tireless and fearless crusader for the cause of the country. Moreover, he was a man of progressive views and so, with Jawaharlal Nehru, he sought to give a leftist orientation to the course of nationalist movement. When Gandhiji abruptly suspended his non-violent non-cooperation movement in February, 1922, he did not approve of this action of the 'Dictator' and so he became a follower of C.R. Das, the arch-leader of the Swaraj Party. But after his internment in Burma (1925-27) he changed his mind and joined Independence League of Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1928 he worked as a member of the Nehru Committee, but he had his reservations about some of the recommendations of the Nehru Report as dominion status for the country and protection of the rights and privileges of the rulers of the princely states in the future constitutional dispensation of India. At the time of Lahore Congress in 19.9, he (with Srinivas Iyengar) formed Congress Democratic Party. In the 1930s the names of Nehru and Bose became very prominent and, although they did not join the Congress Socialist Party (formed in 1934), they remained the source of inspiration for all leaders of progressive orientation. However, by virtue of being a man of revolutionary

*The death of Netaji is a mystery. It is said that he died in an air crash at Formosa on 18 August, 1945.

views, Bose adopted a different course that became quite manifest after 1936. He did not appreciate the formation and working of the Congress ministries in the provinces and admired the ways of some dictatorial powers of Europe and Asia with a view to win independence for the country by all possible means. In 1938 he presided over the Haripura Congress. But his re-election as Congress President for the following year was not favoured by Gandhiji and other influential leaders of the organisation. Matters took a turn for the worse and so after presiding over the Tripuri Congress in March, 1939, he left the Congress and formed his own party (Forward Bloc). With this his brilliant role as a prominent Congressman following the line of non-violent nationalism comes to an end. And yet one may marvel at the greatness of Netaji that in spite of all these unfortunate happenings, he continued to regard Gandhiji as 'the greatest man of India'.]

INDIA SINCE 1857—A BIRD'S EYE VIEW*

Though the British conquest of India began in 1757 with the Battle of Plassey and the overthrow of the then independent King of Bengal, Nawab Sirajudowla, it was only by slow and gradual stages that the British occupation of India made progress. For instance, after the Battle of Plassey, only the financial administration of Bengal passed into the hands of the British—the political administration remainining in the hands of Nawab Mir Jaffar, the man who had betrayed Nawab Sirajudowla at the last moment and gone over to the British. It was only by stages that the British could take over the entire administration of Bengal. Likewise, it was only by slow and gradual stages that the British rule could be extended over other parts of India. While this process of gradual annexation was going on, the British still formally recognised the suzerainty of the Emperor at Delhi. It should be noted that in the occupation of India, the British used not only arms—but more than arms, the weapons of bribery, treachery and every form of corruption. For instance, the founder of the British Empire in India, Robert Clive, who was later made

*From Bose's *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 20.

a Lord, has been proved by historians to have been guilty of forgery. Likewise Warren Hastings, a Governor-General of India, was accused before the British Parliament by Edmund Burke, a member of the House of Commons, as being guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanours".

The greatest folly and mistake of our predecessors was their inability to realise at the very beginning, the real character and role of the Britishers who came to India. They probably thought that like the innumerable tribes that had wandered to India in the past and had made India their home, the British were just another such tribe. It was much later that they realised that the British had come to conquer and plunder and not to settle down in India. As soon as this was generally understood all over the country, a mighty revolution broke out in 1857, which has been incorrectly called by English historians "the Sepoy Mutiny", but which is regarded by the Indian people as the First War of Independence. In the Great Revolution of 1857, the British were on the point of being thrown out of the country—but partly through superior strategy and partly through luck—they won at the end. Then there followed a reign of terror, the parallel of which it is difficult to find in history. Wholesale massacres took place in the course of which innocent men were bound hand and foot and were blown up from the mouths of cannon.

After the Revolution of 1857, the British realised that by sheer brutal force, they could not hold India long. They, therefore, proceeded to disarm the country. And the second greatest folly and mistake that our predecessors committed was to submit to disarmament. If they had not given up their arms so easily, probably the history of India since 1857 would have been different from what it has been. Having once disarmed the country completely, it has been possible for the British to hold India with the help of a small but efficient modern army.

Along with disarmament, the newly established British Government, now controlled directly from London, commenced its policy of "divide and rule". This policy has been the

way, they discovered the caste problem in 1918 and suddenly became the champions and liberators of the so-called depressed classes. Till the year 1937, Britain had hoped to keep India divided by posing as the champions of the Princes, the Muslims, and the so-called depressed classes. In the general election held under the new constitution of 1935—they found, however, to their great surprise, that all their tricks and bluffs had failed and that a strong nationalist feeling permeated the whole nation and every section of it. Consequently, British policy has now fallen back on its last hope If the Indian people cannot be divided, then the country—India—has to be divided geographically and politically. This is the plan, called Pakistan, which emanated from the fertile brain of a Britisher and which has precedents in other parts of the British Empire. For instance, Ceylon which belonged geographically and culturally to India, was separated from India long ago. Immediately after the last war, Ireland which was always a unified state, was divided into Ulster and the Irish Free State. After the new constitution of 1935, Burma was separated from India. And if the present war had not intervened Palestine would already have been divided into a Jewish State, an Arab State, and a British corridor running between the two. Having themselves invented Pakistan—or the plan for dividing India—the British have been doing a colossal, but skilful, propaganda in support of it. Though the vast majority of the Indian Muslims want a free and independent India—though the President of the Indian National Congress is Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, a Muslim—and though only a minority of the Indian Muslims supports the idea of Pakistan—British propaganda throughout the world gives the impression that the Indian Muslims are not behind the national struggle for liberty and want India to be divided up. The British themselves know that what they propagate is quite false—but they, nevertheless, hope that by repeating a falsehood, again and again they will be able to make the world believe it. When Pakistan was originally invented, the idea was to divide India in a so-called Hindu India and a so-called Muslim India, however fantastic the plan might have been. Since then the fertile brains of the

Britishers have developed the plan still further and if they could have their own way, they would now divide India not into two states, but into five or six. For instance, British politicians say that if the Indian Princes want to secede from the rest of India, they should have a separate state called Rajasthan. If the Sikhs want to secede, they should also have a separate state called Khalistan. And these cunning Britishers are showing special solicitude for the Pathans—that section of the Indian Muslims living in the North-West of India—and they are urging that there should be a separate state in the North-West of India called Pathanistan. Pathanistan seems to be the hot favourite of British politicians at the present moment. They hope that through this plan of Pathanistan they would win over some of the most troublesome people in India—namely, the people of the North-West Frontier Province of India and the independent tribes living between India and Afghanistan—and at the same time, get the sympathy of the Afghan people.

Pakistan is, of course, a fantastic plan and an unpractical proposition—for more reasons than one. India is geographically, historically, culturally, politically and economically an indivisible unit. Secondly, in most parts of India, Hindus and Muslims are so mixed up that it is not possible to separate them. Thirdly, if Muslim states were forcibly set up, new minority problems would be created in these states which would present new difficulties. Fourthly, unless Hindus and Muslims join hands and fight the British, they cannot liberate themselves and their unity is possible only on the basis of a free and undivided India. An independent Pakistan is an impossibility and Pakistan, therefore, means in practice, dividing India in order to ensure British domination for all. It is noteworthy that in his latest utterances, Mr. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, and a champion of Pakistan, has acknowledged that the creation and maintenance of Pakistan is possible only with the help of the British.

Now to resume our story. The struggle that is now going on in India is, in reality, a continuation of the Great Revolution of 1857. In the last four decades of the nineteenth century,

the Indian movement expressed itself in agitation in the press and on the platform. This movement was crystallised into one organisation when the Indian National Congress was inaugurated in 1885. The beginning of this century saw a new awakening in India and along with it, new methods of struggle were devised. Thus, during the first two decades, we see the economic boycott of British goods, on the one side, and revolutionary terrorism on the other. The Indian revolutionaries made a desperate attempt to overthrow British rule with the help of arms during the last war—at a time when Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey were fighting our enemy—but they, the Indian revolutionaries, were crushed. After the war, India needed a new weapon of struggle—and at this psychological moment, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with his method of Satyagraha or passive resistance or civil disobedience.

During the last twenty-two years, the Congress under the Mahatma's leadership has built up a powerful organisation all over the country—including the states of the Princes. It has awakened political life in the remotest villages and among all sections of the people. Most important of all is the fact that the masses of India have learnt how to strike at the powerful enemy even without arms, and the Congress, under Gandhi's leadership, has demonstrated that it is possible to paralyse the administration through the weapon of passive resistance. In short, India has now a disciplined political organisation reaching the remotest villages with which a national struggle can be conducted and with the help of which—a new, independent state can be, later on, built up.

The younger generation in India has, however, learnt from the last twenty years' experience that while passive resistance can hold up or paralyse a foreign administration—it cannot overthrow or expel it, without the use of physical force. Impelled by this experience, the people today are spontaneously passing on from passive to active resistance. And that is why you read and hear today of the unarmed Indian people destroying railway, telegraph and telephone communications—setting fire to police stations, post-offices, and Government

buildings, and using force in many other ways in order to overthrow the British yoke. The last stage will come when active resistance will develop into an armed revolution. Then will come the end of British rule in India.

THE STORM BREAKS (1921)*

The defection of the Moderates from the Congress was responsible for lowering to some extent the intellectual level of that body. But this loss was more than compensated by the rallying of the masses round the Congress banner. Moreover, Mahatma Gandhi did get as his trusted colleagues some veteran Congressmen whose reputation stood high in the country and who now renounced their professional work in order to give their whole time to the Congress. Mr. C.R. Das,** the pleader of Calcutta Bar, who had already made a name in Indian politics as also in Bengali literature, gave up his princely income and plunged into the Non-co-operation Campaign. From Allahabad came Pandit Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Allahabad Bar, who also gave up his professional work. He was joined by his son—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—also an advocate by profession, who was destined to make a name for himself in the days to come. From the Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai, the uncrowned king of that province who had been a lawyer in his earlier life, came forward to join the Mahatma. From the Bombay Presidency, the Mahatma got the support of the Patel Brothers, Mr. Vithalbhai and Mr. Vallabhbhai, both advocates by profession—and also Mr. N.C. Kelkar of Poona, who was the successor of late Lokamanya Tilak in Maharashtra (the southern and eastern portion of Bombay Presidency). The leaders of the Central Provinces who joined the Mahatma were Dr. Moonje, an eye-physician and Mr. Abhayankar, an advocate. The leader of Bihar was Mr. Rajendra Prasad, who renounced a fat income and a most promising career at the Patna Bar in order to work for the Congress. From the Tamil-speaking portion of

*From *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 2.

**So great was the popularity of Mr. C.R. Das at the time that he was spontaneously given the title of 'Deshabandhu' by the people. 'Deshabandhu' means literally 'friend of the country.'

Madras Presidency came Mr. Rajagopalachari, Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Mr. Satyamurti, and from the Telegu-speaking portion Mr. Prakasam, all lawyers by profession. On the supreme executive of the Congress there also sat the Ali brothers—Moulana Mohammed and Moulana Shaukat Ali, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of the most learned of the Moslem divines, and Dr. Ansari of Delhi—all of whom represented the new awakening among the Indian Moslems. Thus it will be seen that it was a very good team that Mahatma Gandhi was able to collect at the outset of his campaign.

Among those who gave up their professional work in response to the appeal of the Congress, the lawyers played a most important part. The example of lawyer-princes like Deshabandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru was followed by lesser lights among the lawyer-fraternity throughout India and as a result, the Congress ranks were replenished by a large number of the whole-time workers of standing and influence. The appeal of the Congress for boycott of law-courts met with a fair measure of success. While a large number of lawyers gave up their practice for good, there was, on the other hand, an intensive campaign to dissuade litigants from approaching British law-courts and persuade them to settle their disputes by arbitration. As a matter of fact, arbitration boards under the control of the Congress came into existence all over the country and owing to their efforts the Government revenue from litigation was considerably reduced. Among with the boycott of law-courts, a campaign was started for promoting temperance and stopping the use of intoxicants of all kinds. The success of this campaign was remarkable throughout India and in many provinces the excise revenue (that is, the revenue from the trade in liquor and other intoxicants) was reduced to one-third of what it formerly was. In some provinces, as in Bihar, the Government felt obliged to conduct a campaign for popularising the use of liquor and other intoxicants in order to increase their revenue.

The temperance movement was exceedingly popular among the masses and it fulfilled a moral as well as an economic purpose, while it caused considerable embarrassment to the

Government. This movement was accompanied by a campaign for the removal of untouchability. In certain parts of India, especially in the south, some castes like sweepers, scavengers, etc. had been treated as untouchables. That is to say, the other castes would not dine with them, would not take food or drink served by them and, in some places, would not allow them to enter the temples. This custom was a factor working against the solidarity of the Indian people and from the moral and human standpoint was quite unjustifiable. It was therefore but natural that when the Congress resolved to launch a campaign for winning political freedom for India, it should also seek to emancipate the masses from the shackles of social bondage of every kind.

In order to afford some measure of economic relief to the masses, the Congress advocated the boycott of foreign cloth and the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving on a large scale. The idea of boycotting foreign cloth was not a new one —since the cry of boycott of British cloth had been first raised in Bengal as early as 1905. The revival of hand-weaving was also not a new proposal, since the Indian handloom industry had held its own against the competition of foreign and Indian mills. But the idea of reviving hand-spinning, which had practically gone out of use, was a novel and a daring one. It was difficult at first to find the men or women who could teach others to spin. The Mahatma, who was himself a good spinner, arranged to turn out batches of men and women who themselves could spin and teach spinning. Within a short time thousands of men and women were sent out all over the country, including the remotest villages, to teach the villagers how to spin. It was also difficult at first to get or buy spinning-wheels. They had to be manufactured in the cities and sent out to the villages, till the village carpenters learned how to make them once again. The cloth woven in hand-looms out of hand-spun yarn was called 'Khadi' or 'Khaddar' and was more coarse than mill-made cloth. As the production of this cloth began to increase, it automatically became the uniform of all Congressmen in India. They were required to set an example to the people by voluntarily wearing coarse 'Khadi' and discarding fine mill-made cloth.

To undertake the above work, both men and money were required. The Mahatma therefore appealed to the nation for ten million members for the Congress and a fund of ten million rupees (13½ rupees=one pound approximately). The response to this appeal proved to be most encouraging but in order to go round collecting money and enlisting members, an initial band of workers was necessary. This band of workers had to be supplied by the student community and the year 1921 therefore opened with an extensive campaign for the boycott of schools and colleges. Students responded to the appeal in large numbers and the response was the greatest in Bengal where the imagination of the youths had been stirred by the colossal sacrifice made by Deshabandhu C.R. Das. It was these student-workers who carried the message of the Congress to all corners of the country, who collected funds, enlisted members, held meetings and demonstrations, preached temperance, established arbitration-boards, taught spinning and weaving and encouraged the revival of home industries. Without them, all the influence of Mahatma Gandhi would not have carried the country very far.

There has been much criticism of the policy of withdrawing students from educational institutions in 1921. Nevertheless, if one dispassionately reviews the situation in the country in 1920-21 the conclusion will be irresistible that the Congress had no option in the matter, if it desired its resolutions to be translated into action. It should also be stated that though originally the Congress did not take in hand the task of establishing 'national' institutions, later on such institutions were started all over the country. Those students who had withdrawn from state-owned or state-controlled institutions in a spirit of non-co-operation but who desired to continue their studies under more salutary conditions, could join the newly-started national institutions and continue their studies. Such institutions were started in Bombay, Ahmedabad (in Bombay Presidency), Poona (in Bombay Presidency), Nagpur (in Central Provinces), Benares (in the United Provinces), Patna (in Bihar), Calcutta and Dacca (in Bengal). Some of these were for liberty education, while others were for technical or

medical education but spinning was compulsory in all of them. In many places there were separate institutions for girls. Many of these institutions still exist and some of them are in a flourishing condition. Besides these educational institutions another set of institutions spontaneously grew up all over India. These were called 'Ashramas'. Built on the the model of the hermitage of old, they were homes for the whole-time political workers. New recruits were also trained there and the local office of the Congress would often be housed in the same premises. The Ashrams also served sometimes as centres for spinning and weaving. From these centres raw cotton and yarn would be distributed among the spinners and weavers and would be received back as yarn and cloth respectively. In many Ashramas there would also be a reading-room and a liberty for the use of the Congress workers and of the local public.

In the programme of progressive non co-operation adopted at Nagpur in December 1920, there was, besides the triple boycott, an item regarding the renunciation of titles conferred by—and resignation of all posts held under—the Government. A comparatively large number of men gave up their titles but an insignificant number resigned their jobs and among the latter was myself. I had passed the Indian Civil Service in England in 1920, but finding that it would be impossible to serve both masters at the same time—namely the British Government and my country—I resigned my post in May 1921, and hurried back to India with a view to taking my place in the national struggle that was then in full swing. I reached Bombay on July 16th and the same afternoon I obtained an interview with Mahatma Gandhi. My object in seeking an interview with Mahatma Gandhi was to get from the leader of the campaign I was about to join, a clear conception of his plan of action. During the last few years I had made some study of the methods and tactics employed by revolutionary leaders in other parts of the world and in the light of that knowledge I wanted to understand the Mahatma's mind and purpose.

I remember vividly the scene of that afternoon. On arriving at Mani Bhawan, the usual residence of Mahatma in Bombay, I was ushered into a room covered with Indian carpets. Almost in the centre, facing the door, sat the Mahatma surrounded by some of his closest followers. All were clad in home-made Khadi. As I entered the room, I felt somewhat out of place in my foreign constume and could not help apologising for it. The Mahatma received me with his characteristic hearty smile and soon put me at ease and the conversation started at once. I desired to obtain a clear understanding of the details—the successive stages—of his plan, leading on step by step to the ultimate seizure of power from the foreign bureaucracy. To that end I began to heap question upon question and the Mahatma replied with his habitual patience. There were three points which needed elucidation, Firstly, how were the different activities conducted by the Congress going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, namely, the non-payment of taxes? Secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes or civil disobedience force the Government to retire from the field and leave us with our freedom? Thirdly, how could the Mahatma promise 'Swaraj' (that is, Home Rule) within one year—as he had been doing ever since the Nagpur Congress? His reply to the first question satisfied me. The response to his appeal for ten million members and ten million rupees having been found to be satisfactory, he had proceeded to the next item in his plan—namely, the boycott of foreign cloth and the propagation of home-made Khadi. During the next few months, his efforts would be concentrated on the Khadi campaign And he expected that the Government would take the initiative in attacking the Congress, the moment it realised that the peaceful constructive activities of the Congress were proving to be successful. When the Government did so, the time would come for disobeying governmental decrees and marching to prison. The prisons would before long be filled to overflowing and then would come the last stage of the campaign—namely, the non-payment of taxes.

The Mahatma's replies to the other two questions were not convincing. I asked him if he expected that the boycott movement would create so much distress in Lancashire that pressure

would be brought to bear on Parliament and the Cabinet to make peace with India. But the Mahatma gave me to understand that he did not consider that to be the means whereby the Government would be forced to come to terms with the Congress. What his real expectation was, I was unable to understand. Either he did not want to give out all his secrets prematurely or he did not have a clear conception of the tactics whereby the hands of the Government could be forced.[1] Altogether, his reply to the second question was disappointing and his reply to the third was no better. What was to him a question of faith—namely, that Swaraj would be won within one year—was by no means clear to me and, personally speaking, I was prepared to work for a much longer period. However, I had no other course but to feel thankful for what I had been able to learn after an hour's conversation. But though I tried to persuade myself at the time that there must have been a lack of understanding on my part, my reason told me clearly, again and again, that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated and that he himself did not have a clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom.

Depressed and disappointed as I was, what was I to do? The Mahatma advised me to report myself to Deshabandhu C.R. Das on reaching Calcutta. I had already written to the latter from Cambridge that I had resigned the Indian Civil Service and had decided to join the political movement. Stories had reached us in England that he had given up his princely career at the Bar and was going to devote his whole time to political work, while making a gift of his entire property to the nation. In my eagerness to meet this great man, I overcame the somewhat depressing effect of my interview with Mahatma Gandhi and I left Bombay with the same excitement and the same enthusiasm with which I had landed there. On reaching

1. Looking back on the incident today, it strikes me that possibly the Mahatma expected a 'change of heart' on the part of the British Government, leading to an acceptance of India's national demands.

Calcutta. I went straight to the house of Deshabandhu Das. Once again I was disappointed. He was out on a long tour in the interior of the province and I had no option but to wait for his return. When I heard that he was back, I called again He was out at the time but I was received with great kindness and cordiality by his wife, Srijukta Basanti Debi. Before long he arrived on the scene, I can still picture before my mind's eye his massive figure as he approached me. He was not the same Mr. Das whom I had once approched for advice when he was one of the leaders of the Calcutta Bar and I a student, expelled from the University for political reasons. He was not the same Mr. Das who was earning thousands in a day and spending thousands in an hour. Though his house was no longer a palace, he was however the same Mr. Das, who had always been a friend of youth, could understand their aspirations and sympathise with their sorrows. During the course of our conversation I began to feel that here was a man who knew what he was about—who would give all that he had and who could demand from others all they could give—a man to whom youthfulness was not a short-coming but a virtue. By the time our conversation came to an end my mind was made up. I felt that I had found a leader and I meant to follow him.

On settling down in Calcutta I proceeded to take stock of the situation in the country and particularly in the province of Bengal. Throughout the country there was unparalleled enthusiasm. The 'triple boycott' had been fairly successful. Though the legislatures were not empty, no Congressmen had gone there. The lawyers had on the whole made a good response and the student community had come out of the ordeal with flying colours.[1] The appeal for Congress members and for funds had borne good fruit, and feeling highly encouraged at the state of affairs the Mahatma had launched in July a campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth and the revival of

1. The people had taken up enthusiastically the propaganda for the removal of untouchability and for the stoppage of the drink and drug traffic.

spinning and weaving. On the anniversary of the death of Lokamanya Tilak, August 1st, 1921, there were huge bonfires of foreign cloth all over the country. A symbolic meaning was also given by the Congress leaders to these bonfires which were to burn to ashes all the dross, all the dirt and all the weakness that was in the country. The whole-hearted support of the Moslem community and the novelty of the method of non-co-operation brought more strength to the movement, while the slogan of 'Swaraj within one year' drew into the field many people who would have been appalled by the prospect of a long period of suffering.

In Bengal two important events took place—the Assam-Bengal Railway Strike and the no-tax campaign in Midnapore District. The railway strike paralysed completely all rail and steamer traffic in East Bengal and Assam. The strike was conducted under the leadership of Bengal Congress Committee and in the earlier stages it was so successful that it made the people conscious of the power that they could wield if only they could combine against the authorities. As a timely settlement was not made, the strike dragged on for a long period and it ultimately collapsed, bringing disaster in its train. It was in connection with this strike that Mr. J M. Sen-Gupta first came into prominence before the public eye. The other event of importance was the no-tax campaign in Midnapore District. In 1919 at the instance of Sir S.P. Sinha (afterwards Lord Sinha), a member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bengal, an Act had been passed purporting to introduce a measure of Self-Government for the villages—whereby union-boards would be established for every group of villages in the province. There had been considerable criticism of this measure mainly on two grounds—firstly, the power that should be transferred to the villagers was still retained in the hands of the district officials (for instance, the power to appoint and dismiss village policemen) and secondly, the establishment of union-boards entailed additional taxation in return for which no advantages would accrue. The Act provided that it was open to the Provincial Government to introduce it in any district or to withdrew it therefrom. Under the leadership of Mr. B.N. Sasmal, an advocate, the people of Midnapore started an agitation for the

withdrawal of the Act from their district, and to strengthen their demand they refused to pay the taxes imposed by the newly-established union-boards. The usual repressive measures were taken to force the new Act on the district. Forcible seizure of property, harassment and prosecution of the villagers, intimidation by military police and by soldiers—all were tried but without success. The orgy of repression continued throughout the year 1921, but the Act had ultimately to be withdrawn in 1922. The success of this no-tax campaign gave considerable strength and self-confidence to the people of Midnapore and popularity to their leader, Mr. B.N. Sasmal.

It is necessary to interrupt our narrative here and to refer to the attitude adopted by the authorities in 1921. At first the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, did not take Mahatma Gandhi seriously. In January, the Duke of Connaught, uncle of the present King, visited India with the object of inaugurating the new legislatures. His visit was boycotted by the Indian National Congress and there were boycott demonstrations wherever the Duke went. These demonstrations annoyed the Government of India and their attitude of indifferent neutrality began to change slowly. In April, Lord Chelmsford was succeeded by Lord Reading the brilliant ex-Lord Chief Justice of England. Soon after his arrival, in the month of May, an interview was arranged between him and Mahatma Gandhi. At this interview, Lord Reading gave an assurance to the Mahatma that he would not interfere with the work of the Congress as long as there was no resort to violence. He further stated that in a speech of his, Moulana Mohammed Ali, the right-hand man of the Mahatma, had made an appeal for resorting to violence and that the Government were thinking of prosecuting him. The Mahatma promised to see to it that the Moulana gave a public assurance that he would eschew violence in every way and this promise was duly carried out. Though there was nothing wrong or humiliating in the whole affair, to the public eye it appeared as if both the Mahatma and the Moulana had been outmanoeuvred by the astute Viceroy. Though the contemplated prosecution of Moulana Mohammed Ali was dropped after this interview, he and other Moslem

leaders were arrested in September for their participation in the Khilafat Conference at Karachi in August and were sentence to two years' 'rigorous imprisonment'. At this Conference, a resolution was passed calling upon all Moslems to give up service under the Government, whether in a civil or in a military capacity and this constituted a breach of the law. After the conviction of the Ali brothers and their associates, Mahatma Gandhi came forward to take up the challenge. The same resolution was signed and published by forty-six Congress leaders, and it was repeated from a thousand platforms all over India. But the Government did not make a single arrest and took no notice of this defiance on the part of the Congress. In September, the Indian Legislative Assembly—the Central Parliament set up under the New Constitution—passed a resolution urging an examination and revision of the constitution earlier than 1929. No immediate reply to this came from the side of the Gavernment but the following year, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Peel, in a despatch on the subject dated November 3rd, 1922, stated that it was too early to contemplate a revision of the constitution.

From the above narrative it might appear as if throughout 1921 Mahatma Gandhi was riding on the crest of a wave and had no obstacles to encounter. This impression is not altogether correct. No doubt there was a tremendous volume of mass opinion on his side—but so far as the intelligentsia were concerned, there were certain elements opposed to him. In the first place, the Indian Liberals were everywhere arrayed against him and in most provinces they had accepted office as Ministers. This co-operation on the part of the Liberals was the direct result of the efforts of Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, and as long as he remained in office—that is, till March 1922—they were enthusiastically in support of the Constitution. After his resignation from the British Cabinet, reaction set in and Liberal leaders began to feel that it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to continue their co-operation. In April 1922, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru resigned from the Executive Council of the Viceroy and in May 1923, Mr. Chintamani, Liberal Leader of the United Provinces, resigned the office of Minister of Education in that

province. Gradually the Liberals all turned against the Government and by 1927 the change was so great that when the Simon Commission was appointed, Congressmen and Liberals could preach boycott from the same platform.

Closely allied with the Indian Liberals inmentality and outlook were the University authorities who had been hard hit by the Congress policy of boycott of educational institutions. Though their influence had been drowned for the time being by the rising tide of non-co-operation, they continued to exert what influence they still possessed against the Congress. In this effort they had the support of no less a personality than India's illustrious poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. The poet arrived in Bombay from Europe about the middle of July. As a matter of fact, I travelled in the same boat with him. During our voyage, I had occasion to discuss with him the new policy of non-co-operation adopted by the Congress. He was by no means hostile to the idea. He was only anxious that there should be more of constructive activity, so that ultimately a state within the state could be built up, entirely on the cooperation and support of the people. What he suggested was analogous to the constructive side of the Irish Sinn Fein movements and was completely in accord with my views. But immediately after his arrival in India, he was surrounded by a group of people who were opposed to the Non-co-operation Movement and who began to point out to him only the shortcomings of that movement—as well as the personal views of the Mahatma on modern science and modern medicine, which had no connection with the political programme of the Congress. Under the impression that the Non-co-operation Movement was aiming at a break with Western science, culture and civilisation, the poet delivered a forceful address in Calcutta under the caption 'Unity of Culture' and roundly condemned any attempt to isolate India from the culture and civilisation of the rest of the world and deprecated the boycott of educational institutions. Congress circles could not take this assault lying down but it was impossible to find a literary man of the same standing as the poet to reply to his attack. However, the premier novelist of

the Deshabandhu tried to convince them that non-violent non-co-operation, instead of weakening or demoralising the people, would strengthen their power of effective resistance. The upshot of the conference was that all those present promised to give a full chance to the Congress to strive for Swaraj and promised to do nothing to hamper its work, while many of them agreed to join the Congress organisation as loyal and active members.

The conference between the Mahatma and the ex-revolutionaries took place behind closed doors in September 1921, when he and other members of the Congress Working Committee were staying as guests of Deshabandhu C. R. Das. This was the first occasion when I had an opportunity of coming into personal contact with the prominent leaders of the Congress. Besides the Deshabandhu, the outstanding personalities then were Pandit Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and Moulana Mohammed Ali. It is difficult to say how far the Mahatma would have succeeded in 1921 without their active support. To realise the importance of Lalaji and Deshabandhu one has only to visualise the political situation in the Punjab and in Bengal in their absence. And in 1921, Nehru Junior (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru) was not so well known or experienced that he could have replaced his father. Besides the influence which the first three leaders had in their own provinces, their importance was also due to the fact that they were the three outstanding intellectual stalwarts of the Congress. Many of the blunders committed by the Mahatma as a political leader could have been avoided if they had been in a position to advise him. Since the death of these three giants, the leadership of the Congress has fallen to a low intellectual level. The Congress Working Committee today is undoubtedly composed of some of the finest men of India—men who have character and courage, patriotism and sacrifice. But most of them have been chosen primarily because of their 'blind' loyalty to the Mahatma—and there are few among them who have the capacity to think for themselves or the desire to speak out against the Mahatma when he is likely to take a wrong step. In the circumstances the Congress Cabinet of today is a one-man show.

In 1921, besides the above three leaders, the Ali brothers (Moulana Mohammed and Moulana Shaukat Ali) had a unique position among the public. This was due partly to their own activities and their suffering during the Great War—partly to the new awakening among the Moslems—but largely to the propaganda conducted in their favour by the Mahatma. The Mahatma associated himself so closely with them that they came to be looked upon as the right and the left hands of the Mahatma. In their company the Mahatma toured the country and one clearly remembers that in those days whenever there was a popular shout of 'Victory to Mahatma Gandhi' (Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai), it would be accompanied by a shout of 'Victory to the Ali Brothers' (Ali Bhaion-Ki Jai). Though after some year the Ali brothers parted company with the Mahatma, I do not think one could find fault with the latter for his intimate association with them. The real mistake in my opinion did not lie in connecting the Khilafat issue with the other national issues, but in allowing the Khilafat Committee to be set up as an independent organisation throughout the country, quite apart from the Indian National Congress. The result of this was that when later on Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha, as the leader of the New Turkey, forced the Sultan to abdicate and abolished the office of Khalifa altogether, the Khilafat question lost all meaning and significance and the majority of the members of the Khilafat organisations were absorbed by sectarian, reactionary and pro-British Moslem organisations. If no separate Khilafat Committees had been organised and all Khilafatist Moslems had been persuaded to join the ranks of the Indian National Congress, they would probably have been absorbed by the latter when the Khilafat issue became a dead one.

After the middle of the year, the political situation began to grow tense. Neither the Government nor the Congress knew at the time when the storm would break, but signs of the coming clash began to appear in different parts of the country. Throughout all these episodes the public took the offensive and the Government played a defensive role. Reference has already been made to the no-tax campaign in Midnapore

District in Bengal and to the defiant conduct of the Congress leaders after the incarceration of the Ali brothers in September, following the Khilafat Conference at Karachi. Two other incidents are worth mentioning—the 'Akali' movement in the Punjab and the Moplah rebellion in Malabar in the south. The Akalis were a section among the Sikhs analogous to the Puritans among the Christians. They wanted primarily to reform the administration of the Sikh shrines or Gurudwaras. These shrines were mostly very rich and were administered by a set of 'Mohants', who though required to act merely as trustees living an ascetic and abstemious life, generally lived a thoroughly disreputable life at the public expense. The Akalis wanted to dispossess these Mohants and bring the shrines under the administration of popular committees. As always happens in an enslaved country, the Government rallied to the support of the vested interests—the Mohants. Thus a movement directed against the Mohants soon developed into a movement against the Government. The tactics of the Akalis were in keeping with the Congress policy of non-violent non-co-operation and consisted in sending 'Jathas' or groups of men and women to take possession of the shrines. They were arrested and put into prison or mercilessly beaten and forcibly dispersed. This movement went on for a year till, in November 1922, the Government came to its senses and introduced legislation in the Punjab Legislative Council to concede what the Akalis had demanded from the beginning. The Moplahs of Malabar were a section of the Moslem community. Their rising was directed against the local Hindus; nevertheless it was also an attack on the Government and as such, caused them considerable anxiety and embarrassment. It has significance also because it was the first incident to loosen Hindu-Moslem unity.

In spite of these isolated phenomena of revolt, till November 1921, there was no sign of a country-wide conflict, far less of the Swaraj promised 'within one year'. Congress circles were therefore getting uneasy and depressed, when the Government came to the rescue. An announcement was made

that the Prince of Wales would visit India and that he would land in Bombay on November 17th. The motive behind the visit was, of course, to assuage public feeling and rally public support for the Government. The Congress Working Committee promptly issued instructions for a boycott of the Prince's visit. It was stated that, though the people had nothing against the Prince personally, since he was coming to strengthen the bureaucracy which they were engaged in fighting, they had no option but to boycott his visit. As a first step towards this boycott, a 'hartal' or boycott demonstration was called for November 17th, when there should be a complete suspension of business all over the country. On that day, the boycott demonstration in Bombay was not a success. There was a clash between supporters of the Government and those of the Congress which resulted in prolonged rioting. But in Northern India, especially in Calcutta, the demonstration was a unique success, due largely to the wholehearted co-operation of the Khilafat organisations. So great was the success in Calcutta that the Anglo-Indian Papers, the *Statesman* and *Englishman*, wrote the next day that Congress volunteers had taken possession of the city and the Government had abdicated and they demanded immediate and drastic action against the Congress volunteers. Within twenty-four hours, the Government of Bengal issued a notification declaring them to be illegal. This was followed by similar notifications in other parts of the country.

We had been spoiling for a fight in Calcutta and the official notification therefore was thrice welcome to us. The general opinion was in favour of an immediate reply to the official challenge. But our leader, Deshabandhu Das, was cautious. He wanted time to take stock of his following in the province and to consult Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee. Secret circulars were sent out at once to different parts of the province for a report as to the measure of public support that would be forthcoming if the Congress started open defiance of the official ban. In less than a week encouraging reports began to pour in from the districts. A meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee of Bengal was

thereupon summond behined closed doors towards the end of November to decide our course of action This committee was a body of about 300 members representing the Congress organisations of Bengal. By that time I had become a member of that body and I was able to participate in the deliberations. It was unanimously decided to start civil disobedience and in view of the state of emergency, all the powers of the committee were vested in its President, Deshabandhu Das,—and he was further authorised to nominate his successors. Thus he was appointed the Congress Dictator for the province—a procedure which was to be followed subsequently all over the country.

Contrary to the advice given by the younger hot-heads of the party who wanted to commence with a big demonstration, the leader decided to make a modest beginning. He wanted, he said, to work up the movement slowly and restrict the fight to a single clear issue. That issue was—would the Government take action if batches of five volunteers went out peacefully to hawk Khadi cloth—not in uniform as we had suggested, but in mufti ? If they did so, then the public would regard the action of the Government as wholly arbitrary and unjustified and all sections would then rally to the support of the Congress. On this issue the fight began and I was put in charge of the campaign My work as the Principal of the National College could not be continued and more so, because the students and some members of the staff were anxious to join the campaign We issued an appeal for volunteers who would go out to defy the official ban and accept all the consequences. The response was discouraging. Apparently the public were still lukewarm and some stimulus was required to stir them up. The leader suggested that his son and his wife should go out as volunteers in order to set an example to others. We opposed the idea especially on the ground that no lady should be permitted to go out as long as there was a single man left. But the leader was adamant in his decision. So the next day young Das, who was about the same age as myself—went out at the head of the volunteers and was at once

taken to prison.[1] There was an immediate change in the atmosphere and more volunteers began to enlist—but even that was not enough So the turn came for Mrs. Das. Accompanied by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Urmila Devi and another associate, Miss Suniti Devi, she went out at the head of volunteers. When the news spread in the city that Mrs. Das and other ladies had been taken to prison, there was wild excitement. In utter indignation young and old, rich and poor began to pour in as volunteers. The authorities were alarmed and they converted the city into an armed camp. But our battle was half-won

Indignation was not confined to the public but spread within the ranks of the hitherto loyal police. At the police-station, as Mrs. Das stepped into the prison-van, to be conveyed to prison, numbers of police constables came up to her and vowed that they were going to resign their jobs the same day. There was consternation in Government circles. No one knew at the time how far the contagion would spread. Orders were issued at once by Government that the pay of police constables would be substantially increased. The same evening at a dinner party in the Government House there was a sensation. Mr. S.N. Mullick, a leading Liberal politician (who was afterwards a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India)—when he heard of Mrs. Das's arrest—left Government House immediately as a protest. So tense was the excitement that before midnight the Government had to order the release of Mrs. Das and her associates, and the public were given to understand that the arrests had been made through a mistake. From the next day thousands of students and factory-workers began to enlist as volunteers. Within a few days the two big prisons in the city were filled with political prisoners. Camp-prisons were then opened but they too were filled in no time. The Government then resorted to drastic action. Orders were

1. According to the rules of non-co-operation, a Congressman was required not to put up a defence when brought up for trial before a British law-court. The prosecution therefore had an easy time and it would not generally take more than a few minutes to dispose of the cases.

issued for the arrest of Deshabandhu Das and his close associates, and by the evening of December 10th, 1921 we were all in prison.

But these arrests acted as a further stimulus and as more people were arrested the prison-administration become more unmanageable. Orders were given for the release of a large number of political prisoners but no one would leave the prison, and, moreover, it was impossible to identify them. Sometimes they would be taken to the prison office on the pretext of being transferred to some other prison or of being interviewed by their relatives and there they would be set free. When this trick was discovered, no prisoner would leave his cell when called by a prison-official. Prisoners were thereupon taken forcibly to the prison-gate and set at liberty. Outside prison, tactics were changed Arrests were stopped and orders were given that sticks and batons should be used freely by the police in dealing with crowds and demonstrators. In some cases demonstrators were removed in police-vans to out-of-the-way places thirty miles from the city and there asked to walk back home. A liberal use was also made of the hose in order to give the demonstrators free cold baths in winter.

But it was clear to everybody that these makeshift arrangements and tactics would not do. The situation was going out of hand from the official point of view. The novelty of the tactics employed by the Congress had nonplussed the Government. They could of course have made a reckless and ruthless use of force on a large scale to put down the movement as they did subsequently, but they were embarrassed by the presence of the Prince of Wales in India. The Prince of Wales was due to arrive in Calcutta—the storm centre of the 1921 movement—on December 24th, and about a week before that, the Viceroy, Lord Reading, arrived there. The members of the Calcutta Bar had previously agreed to invite him to a banquet, as he was ex-Lord Chief Justice of England. But in view of the arrest of Deshabandhu Das, they cancelled the engagement. The Government of India thus found themselves in an exceedingly difficult position as they met with opposition everywhere. In the first place, though the civil disobedience

movement was strongest in Bengal, it was fairly strong throughout Upper India and no province was free from it. In addition to this the Akali movement in the Punjab, the no-tax campaign in the Midnapore District in Bengal, and the Moplah Rebellion in Malabar in South India intensified the crisis. Outside India, the Sinn Fein Movement in Ireland had been largely successful, a treaty with Great Britain having been signed on December 6th, 1921. Some months earlier, Afghanistan had entered into a treaty with Mustafa Kemal Pasha and this was followed by a treaty between Persia and Soviet Russia. In Egypt, the Nationalist Wafd Party of Syed Zaghlul Pasha was strong and active. Thus it was apparent that the entire Moslem world was combining against Great Britain and this had an inevitable reaction on the Moslems of India. In these circumstances it was no surprise that the Government of Lord Reading should be anxious for a settlement with the Congress. A peace-maker was found in Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the veteran nationalist leader, who for reasons of his own, had kept away from the 1921 movement. He came to interview Deshabandhu Das in the Presidency Jail with a message from the Viceroy. The offer that he brought was that if the Congress agreed to call off the civil disobedience movement immediately, so that the Prince's visit would not be boycotted by the public, the Government would simultaneously withdraw the notification declaring Congress volunteers illegal and release all those who had been incarcerated thereunder. They would further summon a Round Table Conference of the representatives of the Government and the Congress to settle the future constitution of India.

The leader had a long discussion with Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, the outstanding Moslem leader of Calcutta, and with Pandit Malaviya. Some other points had to be decided, including the question of the release of the Ali brothers and their associates, who had been sentenced to two years' hard labour at Karachi in September. On this point the official reply was that since they had not been sentenced in connection with the civil disobedience movement, the Congress should not press for their release as a part of the terms of settlement.

But the Viceroy was prepared to give an assurance that they would actually be released in due course. When Deshabandhu Das brouched the subject to us and asked for our opinion, the younger section, including myself, vehemently opposed the idea of an armistice on those terms. Thereupon he entered into an elaborate discussion with us and advanced the following arguments in support of his contention that a compromise should be made at once. Rightly or wrongly, he said, the Mahatma had promised Swaraj within one year. That year was drawing to a close. Barely a fortnight was left and within this short period something had to be achieved in order to save the face of the Congress and fulfil the Mahatma's promise regarding Swaraj. The offer of the Viceroy had come to him as a god-send. If a settlement was made before December 31st and all the political prisoners were released, it would appear to the popular imagination as a great triumph for the Congress. The Round Table Conference might or might not be a success, but if it failed and the Government refused to concede the popular demands—the Congress could resume the fight at any time and when it did so, it would command greater prestige and public confidence.

The above logic was irrefutable and I felt convinced. Under the joint signatures of Deshabandhu Das and Moulana A.K. Azad, a telegram was sent to Mahatma Gandhi recommending for acceptance the proposed terms of settlement. A reply came to the effect that he insisted on the release of the Ali brothers and their associates as a part of the terms of settlement and also on an announcement regarding the date and composition of the Round Table Conference. Unfortunately, the Viceroy was not in a mood for any further parleying and wanted an immediate decision. All that the Deshabandhu could do in the circumstances was to send for his friends who were then outside prison and urge upon them that they should use all possible means to get the Mahatma to agree. These friends did so and many telegrams passed between Calcutta and Sabarmati, the usual residence of the Mahatma near Ahmedabad. Ultimately the Mahatma did come round, but by then it was too late. The Government of

India, tired of waiting, had changed their mind. The Deshabandhu was beside himself with anger and disgust. The chance of a lifetime, he said, had been lost.

The feeling among the political prisoners, as also among the Congress rank and file, was that the Mahatma had committed a serious blunder. Only a minority, who had blind faith in him, refused to pass any judgment. However, since the opportunity had been lost, there was no option but to make the best of a bad situation. The Deshabandhu had been elected President of the ensuing Congress which was to meet at Ahmedabad in the last week of December. His half-written speech, which was a vindication of the principles and methods of the non-co-operation movement, was sent to the Congress and the presidential chair was filled, in his absence, by Hakim Ajmal Khan, the outstanding leader of Delhi. There was great enthusiasm at the Ahmedabad Congress and the main resolution was one which called upon the whole country to adopt a policy of individual and mass civil disobedience. Every man and woman was exhorted to join the National Volunteer Corps, defy the emergency ordinances and court imprisonment. The Congress further appointed the Mahatma as the Dictator for the whole country, following the precedent of the Bengal Congress Committee, who had appointed the Deshabandhu as the Dictator for the province.

There was an interesting episode at the Ahmedabad Congress. Moulana Hasrat Mohani, an influential Moslem leader of the United Provinces, moved a resolution to the effect that the goal of the Indian National Congress should be defined in the constitution as the establishment of a republic (the United States of India). So impassioned was his eloquence and so responsive was the audience, that one felt as if the resolution would be carried by a large majority. But the Mahatma rose to oppose the resolution and with great sobriety argued against the proposition, with the result that it was thrown out by the house. The proposition was, however, to be brought up over and over again at subsequent Congresses till it was accepted at the Lahore Congress in 1929,

the mover on that occasion being none other than the Mahatma himself.

With the dissolution of the Congress, the year 1921 came to an end. Nothing of a startling character happened on or before December 31st. The promised Swaraj did not come. A few months earlier at the conference with the ex-revolutionaries of Bengal, the Mahatma had said that he was so sure of getting Swaraj before the end of the year that he could not conceive of himself as living beyond December 31st, without having won Swaraj. He had further said that provincial autonomy and diarchy in the Central Government he could have for the mere asking, but he wanted full Dominion status and if he had that, he would be prepared to unfurl the Union Jack over his Ashrama. As the curtain was rung down on December 31st, 1921, these words floated like dreams before my mind's eye.

Before the end of the year, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi, all the other important leaders were in prison. As a matter of fact, at the time of the negotiations between the Deshabandhu and the Viceroy, none of the outstanding intellectual stalwarts was in a position to advise the Mahatma as to the proper course for him to adopt. If they had done so, then, in all probability, events would have taken a different course. There can of course be no doubt that within twelve months the country had made tremendous progress and much of the credit for that belonged to the Mahatma. But what has to be regretted is that he did not show sufficient diplomacy and prudence when the crucial hour arrived. In this connection I am reminded of what the Deshabandhu used frequently to say about the virtues and failings of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. According to him, the Mahatma opens a campaign in a brilliant fashion ; he works it up with unerring skill ; he moves from success to success till he reaches the zenith of his campaign—but after that he loses his nerve and begins to falter.

Before we close this chapter it would be desirable to take stock of the year's achievements and failures. The year 1921

undoubtedly gave the country a highly-organised party-organisation. Before that, the Congress was a constitutional party and mainly a talking body. The Mahatma not only gave it a new Constitution and a nation-wide basis—but what is more important, converted it into a revolutionary organisation. The tricolour national flag—red,[1] green and white—was adopted all over the country and assumed great importance. Uniform slogans were repeated everywhere and a uniform policy and ideology gained currency from one end of India to the other. The English language lost its importance and the Congress adopted Hindi (or Hindustani) as the *lingua franca* for the whole country. Spontaneously, Khadi became the official uniform for all Congressmen. In short, all the features of a modern political party became visible in India. The credit for such achievements naturally belongs to the leader of the movement—Mahatma Gandhi. He has unfortunately been guilty of many serious blunders—'Himalayan blunders' to use his own language. And the fact that even today he is enthroned in the hearts of his countrymen does not mean that he has been free from errors of judgment but that his positive achievements have been really so great that his countrymen are prepared to forgive his mistakes.

It is necessary, in this connection, to refer to some of the shortcomings inherent in the movement from the very beginning and which were to reveal themselves more and more with the lapse of time. In the first place, too much power and responsibility was handed over to one man. The disadvantages of such a state of things were not so great, while Deshabandhu C. R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Motilal Nehru were alive, since they could control the Mahatma to some extent. But since their death the entire intellect of the Congress has been mortgaged to one man and those who dare to think freely and speak out openly are regarded by the Mahatma and his disciples as heretics and treated as such. Secondly, the promise of 'Swaraj within one year was not only unwise but childish. It made the Congress appear so foolish before all

1. The colour red in the national flag has now been altered to saffron.

reasonable men. No doubt the Mahatma's disciples have tried subsequently to explain away the point by saying that the country did not fu fil the conditions and so Swaraj could not be won within one year. The explanation is as unsatisfactory as the original promise was unwise—because arguing in the same way, any leader can say that if you fulfil certain conditions you can be free in one hour. In making political forecasts, no leader worth the name should impose impossible conditions. He should estimate what conditions are likely to be fulfilled and what results are likely be achieved in a given set of circumstances. Thirdly, the introduction of the Khilafat question into Indian politics was unfortunate. As has already been pointed out, if the Khilafatist Moslems had not started a separate organisation but had joined the Indian National Congress, the consequences would not have been so undesirable. In that case, when the action of the Turks themselves made the Khilafat issue a dead one, the Khilafatist Moslems would have been completely absorbed into the ranks of the nationalists.

The storm that was brewing in 1920 actually broke in November 1921. During November and December it raged with great intensity and when the new year dawned, such was the prospect that it was impossible to predict how long it would last. The year 1922 was, however, destined to provide an anti-climax, as we shall presently see.

THE ANTI CLIMAX (1922)*

It is not possible at this distant date to understand how profoundly the people of India believed in 1921 that Swaraj would be won before the end of that year. Even the most sophisticated people shared this optimism. I remember listening once to the speech of an able Bengalee advocate at a public meeting in 1921. in the course of which he asserted in all seriousness : 'We are surely going to get Swaraj before the year is out If you ask me how we are going to win it. I cannot answer. But we are going to win it all the same.'

*From *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 3.

elaborate arrangements had been made by the Government in secret to render his no-tax campaign at Bardoli a debacle and that a large portion of the next instalment of taxes had been already collected. Official circles, sympathetic to the Mahatma, conveyed secret information to him regarding the counter-measures adopted by the Government and warned him of the possibility of a failure, in case he launched the campaign. When Mahatma Gandhi was brought face to face with these facts, he realised the hopelessness of the situation and thinking that without a successful campaign at Bardoli, he could not work up the movement in the country, he decided to use the Chauri-Chaura incident as a pretext for calling off the civil-disobedience movement. Those who know the Mahatma more intimately will not, however, accept this explanation.

While the followers were fretting and fuming against the Dictator, the astute ex-Lord Chief Justice of England was not idle. Throughout 1921 he had given the Mahatma a long rope, but since the Ahmedabad Congress he began to look for an opportunity for putting a stop to his activities. In his weekly paper *Young India*, the Mahatma had written some articles—the finest he has ever written and which will rank for all time among his inspired writings—which the Government held to be seditious. They could therefore arrest him and get him sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. But the point they had to consider was what the effect of such an action would be on the masses who idolised the Mahatma. Lord Reading, it was reported, was genuinely afraid that in spite of all the non-violence which the Dictator preached, his arrest would be followed by widespread disorder, rioting and bloodshed. And coming after Lord Chelmsford, under whose regime the Amritsar massacres had taken place, he had no desire to repeat the terrible events of 1919. He was therefore anxiously and nervously looking for an opportunity to strike at the Mahatma when the latter himself took a step which had a depressing effect all over the country and produced a revolt within the Congress itself. That was the proper psychological moment for Lord Reading to act—if the only Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, would not stand in his way. Fortunately

for the Government of India, early in March, owing to differences with the Cabinet in England. Mr. Montagu was forced to resign. The last obstacle was therefore removed and on March 10th, 1922, Mahatma Gandhi was made a prisoner.

The trial of Mahatma Gandhi was an historic event. In describing the trial proceedings, Deshabandhu C.R. Das in his presidential speech at the Gaya Congress in December 1922, drew an analogy with the trial of Christ before Pontius Pilate. A similar comparison was also drawn by the well-known Y.M,C.A. leader, the late Mr. K.T. Paul.* In the trial, the Mahatma who described himself as a farmer and a weaver, made a lengthy statement describing how 'from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator'. And he ended his statement with these words : 'The only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal.'

The English Judge, Mr. Broomfield, sentenced him to six years' imprisonment.

The resignation of Mr. Montagu was an indication of the growing power of the Conservatives in the Coalition Cabinet of Mr. Lloyd George, the Premier. Under pressure from the Tory members, Mr. Lloyd George delivered in August his famous 'steel-frame' speech in which he described the Civil Service as the steel-frame of the Indian administration which must remain British, no matter what other changes may overtake India. This speech caused widespread resentment in India, because people were looking forward to the day when the power and the emoluments of the Civil Service would be

**The British Connection with India*, by K.T. Paul, London, 1927, p. 50.

curtailed and the people given thereby a due place in the administration of their country. About this time, Lord Winterton, the new Under-Secretary of State for India, visited India. One of the purposes of his visit was to herald a new policy with regard to the Indian Princes and Ruling Chiefs. The year before, when the Prince of Wales visited India, he had noticed a great difference between his reception in British India and in the Indian States. In British India, his visit had been boycotted by the public, whereas in the State he had no such unpleasant experience. Since that moment, the British Government were led to adopt a new attitude towards the Princes—an attitude of greater friendship and cordiality. The Princes, on their part, utilised the occasion for persuading the Government of India to introduce legislation with a view to suppressing hostile agitation and propaganda conducted against the Princes from British India. Accordingly in September 1922, a Bill was introduced in the Assembly called the Indian States (Protection against Disaffection) Bill. The Bill was thrown out by the Assembly but the Viceroy 'certified' it as urgent and necessary and it became law. It is noteworthy in this connection that the new Under-Secretary of State for India, Lord Winterton, in his conference with the Viceroy and the Governors of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, advocated this new attitude towards the Princes and after his visit representatives of the Government of India began to sing praises of the Princes whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself.

In October there was a General Election in England. The Coalition Government broke up and the Conservatives came into power with Mr. Bonar Law at their head and with Viscount Peel and Lord Winterton as Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for India respectively. The next month, Sir Basil Blackett was sent out to India as the Finance Member to the Government of India. The current of reaction began to grow stronger and stronger in India. The Indian Liberal leaders, who under the influence of Mr. Montagu had been led to work the Constitution and to accept office as Ministers, found their position increasingly difficult. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had already resigned from the Viceroy's Executive

Council in April, following the resignation of Montagu in March. And in March 1923, when the situation became unbearable for him, Mr. Chintamani, the Minister for Education in the United Provinces, resigned. During the whole of 1922 the only decent acts which the Government did was to concede the demands of the people in Midnapore district in Bengal and of the Akali Sikhs in Punjab. In Midnapore, the new Village Self-Government Act, as a protest against which the no-tax campaign had been started, was withdrawn, and in Punjab a new law was passed under which all the Sikh shrines were taken out of the control of the Mohants and handed over to popular committees.

We must now interrupt our narrative and enquire as to what the leaders had been doing in the meantime. In the first week of December 1921, Lala Lajpat Rai and most of his principal colleagues had been rounded up by the police at a meeting of the Punjab Congress Committee. A few days later, Deshabandhu Das and most of his colleagues, including the Secretary of the Bengal Congress Committee, Mr. B.N. Sasmal, and myself had been placed under arrest. Following this, Pandit Motilal Nehru and most of the important Congressmen in the United Provinces had been clapped into prison. According to the rules of non-co-operation, no Congressman could put up a defence before a British Court of Law. Consequently, everywhere the prosecution had an easy task. Most of the trials would not last more than a few minutes and the same magistrate would dispose of hundreds of cases in one afternoon. In the case of Deshabandhu Das, however, the trial dragged on for two months and since Mr. Sasmal and I had been made his co-accused in the same case, we had to suffer the agony of a uselessly long trial. It was freely talked about at the time that in view of the prestige and influence commanded by the Deshabandhu, the magistrate was unwilling to convict him without some show of legality. Time was therefore given again and again to the prosecution to collect evidence to prepare their case against him. The prosecution case rested on certain notices, alleged to have been signed by him, which were in violation of the Government proclamation, banning as illegal all volunteer organisations. Those who

worked in the office of the Bengal Congress Committee knew, as a matter of fact, that these notices had not been signed by him. Nevertheless, the official expert in handwriting gave evidence on oath that the signatures were genuinely of the Deshabandhu and on the strength of this so-called expert evidence, he was convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. These as well as other illegalities relating to his arrest were pointed out in a statement made by him before the court toward the end of his trial, in the course of which he sought to prove that the Government never hesitate to break the law when it suits their own purpose. Before sentence was passed, a message was sent on behalf of the prosecution saying that if he accepted the Bardoli resolution, regarding the suspension of civil disobedience, the Government would set him free at once, but he refused to entertain any such proposal.

Soon after our conviction we were transferred to another prison in Calcutta, the Alipore Central Jail, where we had an opportunity of meeting representatives from all the districts in Bengal. Except among the orthodox followers of the Mahatma who were in a minority, the general feeling was one of resentment at the Bardoli decision. This feeling was directed more against the Mahatma, since he was the Dictator of the All-India Congress Committee and the Bardoli resolution had been passed at his instance. Accepting the Bardoli retreat as an accomplished fact, the Deshabandhu tried to devise means for rousing public enthusiasm once again by a change in tactics. He thus conceived of his plan of non-co-operation within the legislatures. According to this plan, Congressmen, instead of boycotting the elections, would stand as candidates at the polls and after capturing the elected seats, would carry on a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent opposition to the Government. The boycott of the legislatures, as conceived by the Calcutta Congress in 1920, had proved to be a failure. While the nationalists had kept away from the legislatures, undesirables had captured those bodies. These people, instead of assisting the popular movement in the country, had lent their support to the Government. Through their help the Government was able to demonstrate to the world that in their policy of repression they had the support

of the elected members of the legislatures. According to the Deshabandhu, in a revolutionary fight, the points of vantage should not be left in the hands of the enemy. Therefore all elected seats in the legislatures, as also in all public bodies (namely, municipalities, district boards, etc.), should be captured by Congressmen. Where there was room for doing any solid constructive work, they could do so. But failing that, they could at least keep up a systematic opposition to the members and agents of the Government, and thereby prevent them from doing mischief. Further, the election campaign would give the Congress an occasion and an opportunity for doing its own propaganda simultaneously all over the country. The adoption of this new policy did not imply that they were to abandon any of the other activities of the Congress, but simply meant an extension of those activities to include capture of the elected seats in the legislatures and all public bodies.

Discussions regarding this new plan were carried on vigorously from day to day in the Alipore Central Jail. It soon appeared that in all these discussions the main contention of the opponents was that the Government of India Act, 1919, hardly left any room for useful opposition within the legislatures. Owing to the presence of Britishers and of other members nominated by the Government, it was difficult, if not impossible, for the elected members to secure a majority either in the Indian Legislative Assembly (the Central Legislature) or in the Provincial Legislatures. Further, the Viceroy, in the case of the former and the Governors, in the case of the latter, had powers of veto and certification, whereby they could always override the decision of the legislatures. The reply to this was that even if the elected members did not have a majority, they could still keep up a continuous opposition against the Government and thereby strengthen the agitation outside the legislatures. Secondly, it would be possible for the elected members to secure a majority in at least some of the legislatures and if the Viceroy or the Governor set aside the decision of any legislature, the Government would stand condemned before the bar of public opinion, both inside India and outside. Lastly, under the existing constitution, a vote

against the Ministers or their departments could not be overridden by the Governor of any province, and if the provincial legislature voted down the salaries of Ministers, they would automatically be thrown out of office and the working of the diarchical constitution would have to be suspended. As these discussions went on for some weeks, two parties crystalled among the political prisoners in the Alipore Jail and they proved to be the nuclei of the future 'Swaraj' and 'No-Change' parties. In May 1922, the annual conference of Congressmen in Bengal, called the 'Provincial Conference', was held in Chittagong. Mrs. C.R. Das was elected President of the Conference because of the gallant part she had played in last year's movement. In her presidential speech, she stated that the Congress might have to consider a change in tactics and suggested, among other things, that the policy of non-cooperation within the legislatures was worth considering. It was not difficult to guess who had inspired her speech and taking it as a feeler sent out by her husband, a storm of controversy was at once let loose all over the country. It was clear therefrom that the orthodox followers of the Mahatma would not think of any deviation from the plan that he had laid down before his arrest and that a stiff fight would take place before the new plan could be adopted by the Congress. This prospect, far from discouraging us, helped to whip up our enthusiasm. The Deshabandhu had frequent discussions with his supporters in prison and he chalked out his future line of action in great detail. Among the measures that he contemplated was the starting of daily papers in English and in the vernacular—and out of this speculation came the birth of his paper *Forward*, which was started in 1923 and soon attained distinctions as one of the leading nationalist papers in India.

During 1922 conflicts between political prisoners and the prison authorities took place in many prisons in India. Matters come to a head in two prisons in Bengal—at Barisal and Faridpur. Political prisoners in these prisons demanded decent treatment at the hands of the authorities and refused to submit to the humiliating treatment generally meted out to prisoners in Indian Jails. The authorities were stubborn and resorted to flogging, but even that could not break the backbone of the

political prisoners. Meanwhile, intense public indignation was roused by the news of the flogging. Even the tame Bengal Legislative Council was stirred to action and within the Government itself, differences of opinion broke out. The Member-in-charge of Jails, Sir Abdur Rahim, disapproved flogging of political prisoners, but he could not carry the Government with him. As a protest he resigned the portfolio of Prisons which was taken up by the then Home Member of the Bengal Government, Sir Hugh Stephenson.

After the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, in March, the Congress Working Committee was at a loss to decide what to do. Thereupon, a Committee was appointed, called the 'Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee', for the purpose of touring the country and reporting on the possibility of starting civil disobedience again. The general feeling among the members of this committee was that it was not possible to start civil disobedience so soon. But the point that it was difficult to settle was what the Congress should do in the meantime. Should the Congress be content with carrying on its peaceful constructive work or should it adopt the new plan suggested by the Deshabandhu ? The committee made an extensive tour of the country and submitted a report after some months. The members of the Committee were equally divided in their conclusions. Hakim Ajmal Khan (Delhi). Pandit Motilal Nehru (Allahabad) and Mr. Vithalbhai J. Patel (Bombay) were in favour of adopting the Deshabandhu's plan of entering the legislatures and Dr. M.A Ansari* (Delhi), Mr. K.R. Iyengar (Madras) and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari (Madras) were against it. As the report was published shortly before the Gaya session of the Congress to be presided over by Deshabandhu Das, his hands were strengthened by the report.

Towards the end of September 1922, there were unexpected floods in the northern districts of Bengal. Though floods and famines are of frequent occurrence in the India of today, the floods of 1922 were of an unprecedented magnitude. Four

*In the light of this fact it is surprising that Dr. Ansari should be one of the sponsors of the Council-entry proposal in 1934.

large districts of Bengal were affected, crops were destrcyed, houses washed away and cattle killed. As a result of the floods, there were several cases of death also. The whole countryside was one vast expanse of water. The Congress organisations throughout the province promptly responded to the appeal for relief and I was among the first batch to arrive at the flooded area for the purpose of organising relief. Thanks to the efforts of Sir P.C. Roy, the famous chemist and the President of the Relief Committee and to the generosity of the public, a fund of more than 400,000 rupees was raised, besides large contributions in cloth, foodstuffs and fodder (for the cattle). On this occasion the Government of Bengal contributed a sum of 20,000 rupees and in justifying the niggardliness of the Government, the Maharaja of Burdwan, a member of the Governor's Executive Council, stated that the Government was not a charitable institution. The relief operations conducted by the public, without any aid from the Government were so successful that they added greatly to the prestige of the Congress, whose members were largely responsible for them. In fact, we had the good fortune to be complimented on our work by the Governor of Bengal, Lord Lytion, personally when he inspected the flooded areas. Since then, the Congress has always taken a leading part in organising relief operations on the occasion of floods and famines.

Between August and December two other noteworthy events took place. The first was the meeting of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Lahore, which was presided over by Deshabandhu Das. In his presidential speech he made a striking declaration to the effect that the Swaraj he was striving to win was not for a section of the people—but for the masses who comprised 98 per cent of the population. Before and after this meeting, he always took a keen interest in the trade union movement and was for some time the President of the Labour Association of the Tata Iron and Steel Company at Jamshedpur. The other event was the meeting of the Young Men's Conference in Calcutta which was the precursor of the youth movement in the province. This Conference revealed the desire on the part of the youth to have a movement and

an organisation of their own, quite apart from the Indian National Congress.

Towards the end of November, a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held in Calcutta at which there was a trial of strength between the supporters of Deshabandhu and of the Mahatma. This was a prelude to the annual session of the Congress. In the last week of December in an atmosphere tense with excitement, the plenary session of the Indian National Congress assembled at Gaya. According to preliminary forecasts, Mr. Das's plan was likely to be defeated. But no one could tell at the time how the voting would go. It was clear, however, that Mr. Das would have influential support from all the provinces, especially from Bengal, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Central Provinces and Maharashtra (part of Bombay Presidency). After stormy debates in the Subjects Committee, the matter came up for voting before the open session of the Congress. Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, a prominent leader from Madras, who was the leader of the Madras Bar and had resigned the post of Advocate-General of Madras, moved an amendment to the effect that representatives of the Congress should contest the elections but should not participate in the work inside the legislatures. On this amendment the principal voting took place and resulted in a big majority for the supporters of the Mahatma. Great was their enthusiasm and the hero of the day was the Madras leader, Mr. Rajagopalachari, who stood up before the Congress as the apostle of Gandhism.

The position of Mr. Das became rather anomalous. He was the President of the Congress, but the plan he advocated had been rejected. To settle his future course of action, he summoned a meeting of his supporters. It was decided that he should resign the membership of the Congress and organise his party under the name of 'Swaraj Party'. The next day when the All-India Congress Committee met for the purpose of laying down the programme of work for the next year, that is 1923, Pandit Motilal Nehru stood up to make an announcement about the formation of the Swaraj-Party. The announcement came as an unexpected blow and cast a shadow on the

jubilant faces of the Mahatma's supporters. Most of the outstanding intellectuals were on the side of the Deshabandhu and there was no doubt that without them, the Congress would lose much of its strength and importance. The announcement first made by Pandit Motilal Nehru was confirmed when Mr. Das in winding up the deliberations, submitted his resignation of the office of president, since he desired to work in opposition to the official resolutions with the object of persuading the country to accept his plan of work.

The supporters of Gandhiji left Gaya satisfied at their victory but not happy, because of the split that had taken place. The Swarajists parted with a sense of defeat, but with the determination to fight and win.

VISION OF A FREE INDIA*

Friends, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the high honour you have done me by requesting me to preside over the deliberations of the Sixth Session of the Maharashtra Provincial Conference. You are probably aware that I did not at first venture to accept the kind invitation, but by referring to the old relations between Bengal and Maharashtra some of my friends touched a most tender chord in my heart. The appeal then proved to be irresistible and every other consideration had to stand aside.

Before I proceed to place before you my view with regard to our present policy and programme, I would like to raise some fundamental problems and attempt to answer them. It is sometimes urged by foreigners that the new awakening in India is entirely an exotic product inspired by alien ideals and methods. This is by no means true. I do not for one moment dispute the fact that the impact of the West has helped to rouse us from intellectual and moral torpor. But that impact has restored self-consciousness to our people, and the movement that has resulted therefrom and which we witness today

*Presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, on May 3, 1928.

is a genuine Swadeshi movement. India has long passed through the traditional period of blind imitation—of reflex action, if you put it in psychological language. She has now recovered her own soul and is busy reconstructing her national movement along national lines and in the light of national ideals.

I agree with Sir Flinders Petrie that civilizations, like individuals grow and die in a cyclic fashion and that each civilization has a certain span of life vouchsafed to it. I also agree with him that, under certain conditions, it is possible for a particular civilization to be reborn after it has spent itself. When this rebirth is to take place, the vital impetus, the *elan vital*, comes not from without but from within. In this manner has Indian civilization been reborn over and over again at the end of each cycle, and that is why India in spite of her hoary antiquity is still young and fresh.

The charge has often been levelled against us that since democracy is an Occidental institution. India, by accepting democratic or semi-democratic institutions, is being Westernized. Some European writers—Lord Ronaldshay for instance—go so far as to say that democracy is unsuited to the Oriental temparament and political advancement in India should not, therefore, be made in that direction. Ignorance and effrontery could not go further. Democracy is by no means a Western institution ; it is a human institution. Wherever man has attempted to evolve political institutions, he has hit upon this wonderful institution of democracy. The past history of India is replete with instances of democratic institutions. Mr. K.P. Jayaswal in his wonderful book, *Hindu Polity*, has dealt with this matter at great length and has given a list of 81 republics in ancient India. The Indian languages are also rich in terminology required in connection with political institutions of an advanced type. Democratic institutions still exist in certain parts of India. Among the Khasis of Assam, for instance, it is still the custom to elect the ruling chief by a vote of the whole clan ; and this custom has been handed down from time immemorial. The principle of democracy was also applied in India in the government of villages and towns.

The other day while visiting the Varendra Research Society Museum at Rajshahi in North Bengal, I was shown a very interesting copper-plate inscription in which it was stated that civic administration in the good old days was vested in a committee of five, including the Nagar Sreshthi (*i.e.* our modern Mayor). With regard to village self-government, it is not necessary to remind an Indian audience about the village Panchayats—democratic institutions handed down to us from days of yore. Not only democratic but other socio-political doctrines of an advanced character were not unknown to India in the past.

Communism, for instance, is not a Western institution. Among the Khasis of Assam, to whom I have referred, private property as an institution does not exist in theory even today. The clan as a whole owns the entire land. I am sure that similar instances can still be found in other parts of India and also in the past history of our country.

I think it necessary at this stage to warn my countrymen, and my young friends in particular, about the attack that is being made on nationalism from more than one quarter. From the point of view of cultural internationalism, nationalism is sometimes assailed as narrow, selfish and aggressive. It is also regarded as a hindrance to the promotion of internationalism in the domain of culture. My reply to the charge is that Indian nationalism is neither narrow, nor selfish, nor aggressive. It is inspired by the highest ideals of the human race, *viz*, Satyam (the true), Shivam (the good), Sundaram (the beautiful). Nationalism in India has instilled into us truthfulness, honesty, manliness and the spirit of service and sacrifice. What is more, it has roused the creative faculties which for centuries had been lying dormant in our people and, as a result, we are experiencing a renaissance in the domain of Indian art.

Another attack is being made on nationalism from the point of view of international labour or international Communism. This attack is not only ill-advised but unconsciously serves the interests of our alien rulers. It would be

clear to the man in the street that before we can endeavour to reconstruct Indian society on a new basis, whether socialistic or otherwise, we should first secure the right to shape our own destiny. As long as India lies prostrate at the feet of Britain, that right will be denied to us. It is, therefore, the paramount duty not only of nationalists but anti nationalistic Communists to bring about the political emancipation of India as early as possible.

I have already hinted that I plead for a coalition between labour and nationalism (I am using 'labour' here in a wider sense to include the peasants as well). It has to be admitted that though we have passed resolutions from the Congress platform time and again regarding the desirability of organising labour, much has not been achieved in that direction.

If we view the programme of the Congress during the last few years we shall find that only in our Khadi programme have we been able to offer to our masses something which means bread and butter to them. Khadi, I am glad to say, has brought food to thousands and thousands of hungry mouths all over India. Given money and organization, there is plenty of scope for pushing on Khadi. There are lakhs and lakhs of poor Indians living on the verge of starvation to whom Khadi can offer a means of subsistence. But the appeal of Khadi cannot be universal. We find from bitter experience in some parts of Bengal that as soon as the masses are a little better off, their Charkhas lie idle and that the peasant who gets a better return from paddy or jute cultivation refuses to cultivate cotton.

Except when Congressmen have joined the Kisan movement, as in the U.P., or have taken up the question of jute cultivation, as in Bengal, or have undertaken a campaign for non-payment of taxes in order to resist illegal taxation or oppressive legislation, as in Gujarat, we have seldom been able to make a direct appeal to the economic interests of the masses. And until this is done—human nature being what it is—how can we expect the masses to join the freedom movement ?

There is another reason why I consider it imperative that the Congress should be more alive to the interests of the masses. Mass consciousness has been roused in India, thanks to the extensive and intensive propaganda undertaken during the non-co-operation movement; and the mass movement cannot possibly be checked now. The only question is along what lines this mass consciousness should manifest itself. If the Congress neglects the masses it is inevitable that a sectional—and if I may say so, anti-national—movement will come into existence and class war among our people will appear even before we have achieved our political emancipation. It would be disastrous in the highest degree if we were to launch class war while we are all bed-fellows in slavery, in order that we may afford amusement to the common enemy. I regret to say that there is at present a tendency among some Indian labourites to belittle the Congress and to condemn the Congress programme. This recrimination should cease and the organized forces of labour and of the Congress should join hands for furthering the economic interests of the masses and promoting the cause of India's political emancipation.

Friends, you will pardon me if for one moment I ask you to lift your eyes from the realities of the present and attempt to scan the future that looms before us. It is desirable that we should search our hearts in order to find out what it is that we are running after, so that we and our succeeding generations may grow up in the light of that ideal and shape our course of action accordingly.

Speaking for myself, I stand for an independent Federal Republic. That is the ultimate goal which I have before me. India must fulfil her own destiny and cannot be content with colonial self-government or Dominion Home Rule. Why must we remain within the British Empire? India is rich in resources, human and material. She has outgrown the infancy which foreigners have been thrusting upon her, and can not only take care of herself but can function as an independent unit. India is not Canada or Australia or South Africa. Indians are an Oriental people, a coloured race, and there is nothing in

common between India and Great Britian from which we may be led to think that Dominion Home Rule within the British Empire is a desirable consummation for India. Rather, India stands to lose by remaining within the Empire. Having been under British domination so long, it may be difficult for Indians to get rid of the inferiority complex in their relations with England. It may also be difficult to resist British exploitation so long as we remain an integral part of the British Empire.

The usual argument that India without the help of Britain cannot defend herself is puerile. It is the Indian army—much more than the British army—which is defending India today. If India is strong enough to fight the battles of England outside her borders—in Tibet. China, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and Flanders—she is certainly strong enough to defend herself from foreign aggression. Moreover, once India is able to free herself, the balance of power in the world will save India as it has saved China. And if the League of Nations becomes a living organization with some sanction behind it, invasion and aggression will be a thing of the past.

While striving to attain liberty we have to note all its implications. You cannot free one half of your soul and keep the other half in bondage. You cannot introduce a light into a room and expect at the same time that some portion of it will remain dark. You cannot establish political democracy and endeavour at the same time to resist the democratization of the society. No, my friends, let us not become a queer mixture of political democrats and social conservatives. Political institutions grow out of the social life of the people and are shaped by their social ideas and ideals. If we want to make India really great, we must build up a political democracy on the pedestal of a democratic society. Privileges based on birth, caste or creed should go, and equal opportunities should be thrown open to all irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The status of women should also be raised and women should be trained to take a larger and a more intelligent interest in public affairs.

While I do not condemn any patch-up work that may be necessary for healing communal sores, I would urge the necessity of discovering a deeper remedy for our communal troubles. It is necessary for the different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another, because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony. I venture to think that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural rapprochement. As things stand today, the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive.

In order to facilitate cultural rapprochement a dose of secular and scientific training is necessary. Fanaticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy, and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education. This sort of education is useful, in another way, in that it helps to rouse our economic consciousness. The dawn of economic consciousness spells the death of fanaticism There is much more in common between a Hindu peasant and a Muslim peasant than between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim zamindar. The masses have only got to be educated wherein their economic interests be, and once they understand it, they will no longer consent to be pawns in communal feuds. By working from the cultural, educational and economic side, we can gradually undermine fanaticism and thereby render possible the growth of healthy nationalism in this country.

One of the most hopeful signs of the time is the awakening among the youth of this country. The movement has spread from one end of the country to the other end, as far as I am aware, has attracted not only young men but young women as well. The youth of this age have become self-conscious ; they have been inspired by an ideal and are anxious to follow the call of their inner nature and fulfil their destiny. The movement is the spontaneous self-expression of the national soul, and on the course of this movement depends the nation's future weal. Our duty, therefore, is not to attempt to crush this new-born spirit but to lend it our support and guidance.

Friends ! I would implore you to assist in the awakening of youth and in the organization of the youth movement. Self-conscious youth will not only act, but will also dream ; will not only destroy, but will also build. It will succeed where even you may fail ; it will create for you a new India—and a free India—out of the failures, trials and experience of the past. And, believe me, if we are to rid India once for all of the canker of communalism and fanaticism, we have to begin work among our youth.

There is another aspect of our movement which has been somewhat neglected in this country—the women's movement. It is impossible for one-half of the nation to win liberty without the active sympathy and support of the other half. In all countries—and even in the Labour Party in England—women's organizations have rendered invaluable service. There are various non-political organizations among women in different parts of the country, but I venture to think that there is room for a country-wide political organization among them. It should be the primary object of this organization, which will be run by women alone, to carry on political propaganda among their sex and to help the work of the Indian National Congress.

Our benign rulers and our self-appointed advisers are in the habit of lecturing day after day on our unfitness for Swaraj. Some say that we must have more education before we can hope to be free ; others maintain that social reform should precede political reform ; still others urge that without industrial development India cannot be fit for Swaraj. None of these statements is true. Indeed it would be far more true to say that without political freedom—*i.e.*, without the power to shape our own destiny—we cannot have either compulsory free education or social reform or industrial advancement. If you demand education for your people as Shri Gokhale did long ago, the plea is put forward by Government that there is no money. If you introduce social legislation for the advancement of your countrymen, you find Miss Mayo's cousins on this side of the Atlantic arrayed against you and on the side of your social die-hards. When

you are working yourself to death in order to bring about the economic and industrial regeneration of India you find to your infinite regret and surprise that your Imperial Banks, your Railways and your Stores Departments are least inclined to help your national enterprises. You pass resolutions in your Municipalities and in your Councils in favour of Prohibition and you find that the Government meets you with a stone-wall of indifference or hostility. I have no doubt in my own mind that Swaraj and Swaraj alone is the sovereign remedy for all our ills. And the only criterion of our fitness for Swaraj is the will to be free.

How to rouse the national will within the shortest possible period is, then, the problem before us; our policies and programmes have to be drawn up with a view to this end. The Congress policy since 1921 has been a dual policy of destruction and obstruction ; of opposition and consolidation. We feel that the bureaucracy has entrenched itself in this country by erecting a network of organizations and institutions and by appointing a hierarchy of officials to run them. These are the seats of bureaucratic power and through them the bureaucracy has a grip on the very heart of the people. We have to storm these citadels of power and for that purpose we have to set up parallel institutions. These parallel organizations are our Congress offices. As our power and infuence increase through the organization of Congress Committees, we shall be able to capture the bureaucratic seats of power. We know from personal experience that in districts where Congress Committees are well organized, the capture of local bodies has been possible without any difficulty. The Congress offices are, therefore, the forts where we have to entrench ourselves and whence we have to stir out every day in order to raid the bureaucratic citadels. Congress Committees are our army, and no plan of campaign, however, skilfully devised, can succeed unless we have a strong, efficient and disciplined army at our command.

Friends ! You will remember that when, after the Gaya Congress of 1922, there was a tendency among a large section of our countrymen to concentrate wholly on the constructive

programme to the exclusion of everything else. Deshbandhu Das pointed out in the manifesto of the Swaraj Party that it was absolutely necessary to keep up a spirit of resistance to the bureaucracy. He firmly believed that without an atmosphere of opposition it was not possible to push on the constructive programme or to achieve success in any other direction. But this basic principle we often seem to forget. "Non-co-operotion is barren"—"opposition has failed"—"obstruction is fruitless" —these are catch-words which mislead the unwary public. The most tragic element in our character is that we do not look ahead ; we are easily upset by failures. We lack the dogged tenacity of John Bull, and unlike him, we cannot therefore fight a long-lasting game.

I have often been asked how the end will come, how the bureaucracy will ultimately be forced to accede to our terms. I have no misgivings in this matter, for I have already had a foretaste of what will come. The movement will reach its climax in a sort of general strike or country-wide hartal coupled with a boycott of British goods. Along with the strike or hartal to bring about which labour and the National Congress will heartily co-operate, there will be some form of civil disobedience because the bureaucracy is not likely to sit idle while a strike is going on. It is also possible that there may be non-payment of taxes in some form or other, but this is not essential. When the crisis is reached the average Britisher at home will feel that to starve India politically means economic starvation for him. And the bureaucracy in India will find that it is impossible to carry on the administration in the face of a country-wide non-co-operation movement. The jails will be full as in 1921, and there will be general demoralization within the ranks of the bureaucracy, who will no longer be able to count upon the loyalty and devotion of their servants and employees. There will be a paralysis of the administration and possibly of foreign trade and commerce. The bureaucracy will consider the situation as chaotic but, from the point of view of the people, the country will be organized, disciplined and determined. The bureaucracy will then be forced to yield to the demands of the people's

representatives, for saving themselves from unnecessary trouble and anxiety and for restoring their trade with India.

Our immediate task is among other things to make the boycott of the Simon Commission complete and effective. We, Congressmen, have never accepted the pernicious preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919. This Act has been forced down our throats but we have never owed willing allegiance to it ; in fact we have tried our level best to non-co-operate with it. We take our stand on the sacred and inviolable rights of men, and the principle of self-determination. We maintain that it is for India to frame her own constitution according to her needs, and it is for Britain to accept in *in toto*. This procedure has been followed not only in the case of countries that have won back their independence but in the case of the self-governing dominions within the British Empire including the Irish Free State.

The counterpart of this boycott, in fact its positive aspect, is the framing of a national constitution. The All Parties' Conference has taken this matter in hand and all lovers of India should wish the Conference complete success. The Secretary of State for India has in a fit of pompous pride challenged India to produce an agreed constitution. If there is a spark of honour and self-respect left in us, we should take up the gauntlet and give a fitting reply by producing a constitution.

I shall not tire you with any details of the constitution that should be drafted. I shall leave that task to our constitution framers and shall content myself by referring to three cardinal points. These three points are as follows :

(1) The Constitution should guarantee national sovereignty, *i.e.*, the sovereignty of the people. What we want is government of the people, by the people and for the people.

(2) The constitution should be prefaced by a 'declaration of rights' which will guarantee the elementary rights of citizenship. Without a 'declaration of rights' a

constitution is not worth the paper it is written on. Repressive laws, ordinances and regulations should be unknown in a free India.

(3) There should be a system of joint electorate. As a temporary arrangement, there may be reservation of seats if that is found necessary. But we should by all means insist on a joint electorate. Nationalism and separate electorates are self contradictory. Separate electorates are wrong in principle and it is futile to attempt to build up a nation on a bad principle. We have had a bitter experience of separate electorates, and the sooner we get rid of them the better for us and for our country.

In order to enforce our national demand, it is necessary to take such steps as lie in our power, because a mere appeal to the sweet reasonableness of Britishers will be of no avail. Weak and unarmed though we are, Providence has in His mercy given us a weapon which we can use with great effect. This weapon is economic boycott, *i.e.*, boycott of British goods. It has been used with great effect in Ireland and in China. It was also used to great advantage during the Swadeshi movement nearly 20 years ago and partly during the non-co-operation movement. Boycott of British goods is necessary for the revival of Swadeshi and for effecting our political salvation.

It is also necessary that, while the political fight is going on, some of us should take up the work of village reorganization. In a vast country like ours there is room for a variety of talent, and scope for diversity of temperament.

We must all be pained to notice that our masses, and particularly our labourers, are at present passing through a severe economic crisis Drastic retrenchment is going on in the different Railways, and particularly in the railway workshops. I understand that several crores worth of railway materials are imported from Great Britain for our Railways whereas these could easily be manufactured in India if the workshops

were extended. If an attempt were made to manufacture these goods in India, far from retrenching the existing labour staff, the administration would be able to provide employment for many more. But here again the interests of the Britishers and their industry have to be safeguarded at the cost of poor India.

It is the bounden duty of all Indians, and of Congressmen in particular, to come to the aid of labour in their hour of trial. Let us try and help them with all the means at our disposal.

Friends ! We have reached a most critical stage in our nation's history and it behoves us to unite all our forces and make a bold stand against the powers that be. Let us all stand shoulder to shoulder and say with one heart and with one voice that our motto is, as Tennyson said through Ulysses, "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

AGAINST DOMINION STATUS*

I am sorry that I have to rise to move an amendment to a resolution moved by Mahatma Gandhi and which has the support of some, if not many, of our older leaders. The fact that I rise today to move the amendment is a clear indication of a cleavage, the fundamental cleavage between the elder school and the new school of thought in the Congress.

I have been asked by some friends why, being a signatory to the Nehru Report, I have stood up to speak for independence. I would only refer to the statement made in the report itself that the principles of the constitution which we submitted in the report can be applied in all their entirety to a constitution of independence. I do not think that in moving this amendment, my action can be construed as in any way inconsistent.

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*Speech at the Calcutta session of the Congress. December 1928, on the resolution which threatened a non-co-operation campaign for complete independence if Britain did not concede Dominion Status by ths end of 1929.

There is another matter to which I shall refer by way of personal explanation. You are aware that in private conversations and elsewhere I have said that I do not desire to stand in the way of elder leaders. The reason why I did so was that at that time I did not feel prepared to accept the responsibility of the consequences of a division in this House in case our amendment was accepted. Today I feel prepared to accept the consequences and to face the issue till the end if my amendment is accepted.

There are certain incidents which have made me somewhat alter my previous views. You are aware that the Bengal delegates, or at least the majority of them, assembled and resolved to have this amendment moved on their behalf and that they were prepared to accept the vote of the House, whatever the consequences might be. Even if I did not stand here today to move the amendment, I can assure you that some other members would have stood up to do so on their behalf.

There is another fact. And that is the decision of the Independence for India League, by an overwhelming majority, to support the amendment and to accept the vote of the House, whatever it might be.

We who feel it our duty to move or support the amendment feel very sincerely that the time is so momentous that India should express herself in a clear and unambiguous manner as to what she feels on the issue of Dominion Status *vs.* Independence. I have told our leaders that after the death of Lala Lajpat Rai and the happenings at Lucknow and Kanpur and the speech of His Excellency the Viceroy, we would expect the Congress to take up a bold attitude, which would fit in with an attitude of self-respect. Instead of that, we find that the Madras Resolution is to be lowered in some measure.

We feel and we say that we are not prepared to lower the flag of Independence even for one single day. Whether we win or lose in this House does not concern us. It is not a matter of concern so far as the younger generations are concer-

ned, for they have accepted the responsibility of making India free. We want our leaders, we love them, we revere them, but at the same time we want them to keep abreast of the times. I have also told them that I and Pandit Jawaharlal are regarded as moderates among the extremists, and if the elder leaders are not prepared to compromise even with these moderates, then the breach between the old and the new will be irreparable. A new consciousness has dawned upon the youth of the country. They are no longer prepared to follow blindfold. They have realised that they are the heirs of the future, that it is for them to make India free, and this new consciousness they are preparing themselves for the arduous task that awaits them.

There is one other argument which appeals to me strongly. And that is the international situation. You should remember that after the Madras Resolution India has got a new status in international politics. I am afraid if this resolution is passed, then we shall lose at least a part, if not much, of the prestige that we have acquired after the Madras Congress. You may be aware that after that we have received messages from far and distant parts of the world. The question now is : are we to go back upon the decision we took at Madras ? Or are we to go ahead ? Are we to respond in a benefitting manner of the attitude of the Government ? And what has been that attitude ? We have the lamentable death of Lalaji, and the regrettable happenings at Lucknow and Kanpur. After all these, do we not feel called upon to take up a defiant and bold attitude ?

I should like to put one straight question. In the main resolution you have given twelve months' time to the British Government. Can you lay your hands on your breasts and say that there is a reasonable chance of getting Dominion Status within the period ? Pandit Motilal has made it clear in his speech that he does not believe so. Then why should we lower the flag for these twelve months ? Why not say we have lost the last vestige of faith in the British Government and that we are going to take a bold stand ?

You may ask what we shall gain by this resolution of Independence. I say, we develop a new mentality. After all, what is the fundamental cause or our political degradation ? It is a question of mentality, and if you want to overcome the slave mentality you do so by encouraging our countrymen to stand for full and complete independence I go further and say, assuming that we do not follow it up by action, that merely by preaching the gospel honestly and placing the goal of independence before our countrymen we shall bring up a new generation

But I tell you we are not going to sit down with folded hands. I have already said that the younger generation realize their responsibility, and they are prepared for their task. We shall devise our own programme and work it out according to the best of our ability so that there is no danger that our resolution will be thrown into the waste paper basket.

There is another matter to which I shall refer before I sit down. All events show that another world war is imminent. I say this for many reasons. The first reason is that the causes which contribute to war are present in different parts of the world. The settlement brought about by the Treaty of Versailles has not satisfied the national aspirations of all people. It has not satisfied the people of Italy, the Balkans, Russia, Austria-Hungary and so on. Then there is the Asiatic situation. We have the combination of capitalistic countries against Soviet Russia. Again there is the race for armaments. These factors tend to a world war. I tell you that talk of disarmament is a huge farce. The fact is, all these countries which are free are working for another war. If India is to be on the alert, we must create a new mentality, a mentality that will say that we want complete independence. This can only be done by proclaiming the ideal in a clear and unequivocal manner.

I do not think we can afford to lose even a single moment. So far as Bengal is concerned, you are aware that since the dawn of the national movement in this country we have always interpreted freedom as complete and full independence. We have never interpreted it in terms of dominion status. After

so many of our countrymen laid down their lives, after our poets preached the gospel, we have understood freedom as full and complete independence. The talk of dominion status does not make the slightest appeal to our countrymen, to the younger generation who are growing up, and we should remember that after all it is the younger generation who are the heirs of the future.

In conclusion, I wish to make a final appeal. I do not think it will mean the slightest disrespect to our leaders if we accept the amendment. Respect and love, admiration and adoration for leaders, is one thing ; but respect for principle is another thing. Accept my resolution, and inspire the younger generation with a new consciousness.

THE MESSAGE OF BENGAL*

Bengal has a message of her own to deliver to the world. The message is the sum total of the life and history of Bengal as a whole ; and as she tried in the past to make that message heard, she is doing it even now. That message is ingrained in the character of Bengal. The heart of Bengal is always for diversity, harmony and fraternity. Bengal is always for novelty. Bengal's innate nature is always dynamic and not static. She might well be called 'revolutionary'. From the Vedic age down to the present, history abounds with instances which show that she is always moving and assimilating.

Truth alone is our ideal and that explains why in spite of many inroads on Bengal in culture, civilization, literature and religion, she always assimilated the truth of the newcomers, keeping her individuality intact all the while. As a result of this thorough 'revolution' Vaishnavism has flourished in Bengal. Efforts in this direction are still going on, but to achieve success we must abolish the entire caste system, or convert all castes into Sudras or Brahmins. It should now be decided which of these means is to be adopted.

*From presidential address delivered at the Rangpur Political Conference, on March 30, 1929.

As in religion so in literature, Bengal has manifested herself in diverse ways. Her Vidyapati and Chandidas, Mukundaram and Bharatchandra, Kasiram, Krittibas and Ram Prasad stand as monumental examples of her new discoveries in the domain of thought and culture. Bengal does not forget the contribution made to her literature by the Mussalmans, and it was here that the indissoluble unity between the two communities was formed which has weathered many storms in the past. In a word, Bengal as she is today is the child of universalism, irrespective of any caste and creed.

But a reaction set in for a time which received a rude shock as Bengal came in contact with Western civilization. True to her characteristics, Bengal woke up to make her contribution in the wake of a new movement inaugurated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The birth of the Brahmo cult saved Bengal from the attack made on her by the Christian missionaries. The unfinished work of the Raja found an impetus when Ramakrishna Paramhamsa and Swami Vivekananda came into the field towards the end of the 19th century. The renaissance of religion was reflected in her literature, philosophy and in all spheres of life, and Hindus and Mussalmans united to preach this gospel of brotherhood.

It was Swami Vivekananda who gave a new turn to the history of Bengal. As he repeatedly said, man-making was his mission in life. In the work of man-making, Swami Vivekananda did not confine his attention to any particular sect but embraced the whole of society. His fiery words—"Let a new India emerge through the workshops and from the huts and bazaars" —are still ringing in every Bengali home.

This socialism did not derive its birth from the books of Karl Marx. It has its origin in the thought and culture of India. The gospel of democracy that was preached by Swami Vivekananda has manifested itself fully in the writings and achievements of Deshbandhu Das, who said that Narain lives amongst those who till the land, prepare our bread by the sweat of their brow, those who in the midst of grinding poverty have kept the torch of our civilization, culture and religion burning.

The first step towards nation-building is the creation of true men and the second step is organization. Vivekananda and others tried to make men, while Deshbandhu tried to create political organization and he created an organization that extorted the admiration even of the Britishers

New ideas of socialism are nowadays travelling to India from the West, and they are revolutionizing the thoughts of many, but the idea of socialism is not a novelty in this country. We regard it as such only because we have lost the thread of our own history. It is not proper to take any school of thought as unmistakable and absolute truth. We must not forget that the Russians, the main disciples of Karl Marx, have not blindly followed his ideas ; finding it difficult to apply his theories they have adopted a new economic policy consistent with possession of private property and ownership of business factories. We have therefore to shape society and politics according to our own ideas and according to our needs. This should be the aim of every Indian.

We have now arrived at the third stage of our political struggle. The first stage was the Swadeshi era, the second was the period of revolutionaries and the third is the stage of non-co operation and socialism. Many might think that our efforts in the fight for Swaraj have gone in vain, but no useful attempt has ever failed. As a result of the last twenty-five years agitation, we have regained our self-respect and self-confidence. The country is gradually being organized and there is no power on earth that can deprive us of our birthright. The problem is only how soon we shall achieve it.

TOWARDS COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE*

Before I proceed to lay my case, I take this opportunity of conveying my cordial and hearty thanks to Mahatma Gandhi for coming forward to move a resolution which declares Swaraj to mean complete independence. But I move this amendment because I believe that the programme laid down by his resolution is not such as to carry us towards the goal of

*Speceh at the Lahore session of the Congress, December, 1929.

complete independence. My amendment is consistent with the goal, and in keeping with the spirit of the times. I have no doubt it will find favour with the younger generation in this country, if not now at least in the next Congress.

Mine is a programme of all round boycott. I do not think it will be of any use taking up one item in the programme of boycott and leaving out others. It will not be consistent with our creed of independence to go and practise in the law courts. It will not be consistent either to enter local bodies, some of which, like the Calcutta Corporation, require the oath of allegiance to be taken. There is another reason why you should give them all up. The task before us is so arduous, and the responsibility on our shoulders is so great, that we shall have to concentrate our whole time and energy on the programme of work. I should like to submit, at this stage, that if you are not prepared to go in for complete boycott, it will be no use your boycotting the Councils only.

Let us be consistent. Let us be for complete boycott or none at all. I am an extremist and my principle is—all or none. If I am to advocate a policy of the capture of public bodies I would like to capture every public body. If we are to boycott at all, why not boycott completely and concentrate our attention and energy on some other programme ? Therefore I would earnestly plead for the acceptance of my amendment. I know public opinion in India today requires it.

Now a word or two on Mahatmaji's resolution. In the preamble, you are asked to endorse the action of the Working Committee in subscribing to the Delhi manifesto.* I am not prepared to advise anyone to do it. Again, are you prepared to accept the reference to the Round Table Conference ? I would not call it a round table. It is certainly not round. I

*The manifesto was issued by the All-Parties Conference convened at Delhi by the Congress President, Pandit Motilal Nehru. It welcomed the Viceroy's Pronouncement of October, 31, 1929, which held out the prospect of Dominion Status, and offered co-operation in evolving a Dominion Constitution for India. Subhas Bose and a few others dissociated themselves from the manifesto.

would call it square. A round table conference is a conference between two belligerent parties, between plenipotentiaries representing opposite sides. I ask you whether the people of India are invited to send any of their representatives with full powers to negotiate with the representatives of the British Government. Are we assured that the conclusions reached at this conference are to be ratified by both parties ? Are we sure that the conclusions of the conference are not to go up for re-consideration before the British Parliament ?

You know that when the treaty was drawn up between Britain and South Africa, the conclusions reached at the conference of both the parties were regarded as sacred by both. I know for a fact that in the case of the South African constitution drawn up at the conference, in spite of its grammatical errors, it had to be ratified by the British Government, and the British Parliament could not even correct those grammatical errors. That is what a round table conference means. What is the character of the conference that has been offered to India ? The Simon Commission and its paraphernalia are to be there, and the conclusions of the conference are to go before the Parliament. It is not merely the people of India that should send representatives to the conference but the European Chambers of Commerce and the Ruling Chiefs. Is there a fight between the British Government, on the one hand, and the European Chambers and Ruling Chiefs on the other ? Is there any fight proceeding between Government and the loyalists ? I know of no such fight. When there are these bodies to send in their representatives to the conference, I say it is not a round table conference. But, unfortunately, people in this country insist on calling it so and the Britishers are equally insistent on not calling it a round table conference.

One argument more and I have done. The resolution refers to the constructive programme as the method whereby we have to achieve the political emancipation of India. I would like the House to consider whether the constructive programme, which the Congress has been pursuing for the last few years, is something which is sufficient to enable us to reach the goal of complete independence. No doubt there is a reference to civil

disobedience in the resolution. But I submit that the civil disobedience will never come until we can organize the workers and peasants and depressed classes on their specific grievances. If my programme is adopted, it will be sufficiently effective for us to march on the road to independence. I appeal to the supporters of the resolution to note the altered circumstances and feedings of the people, particularly the younger generation, and accept my motion.

STORMY 1930*

With the dawn of the new year there was hope and confidence in every heart. People anxiously looked to the Working Committee for instructions as to what they were required to do for the early attainment of independence. The Mahatma sensed the atmosphere correctly and he stated : 'Civil Disobedience alone can save the country from impending lawlessness and secret crime, since there is a party of violence in the country which will not listen to speeches, resolutions, or conferences, but believes only in direct action.' He therefore resolved to place himself at the head of the national struggle in order to keep it within the limits of non-violence. Early in January the first order went out. January 26th should be observed all over India as the day of independence. On that day a manifesto, prepared by the Mahatma and adopted by the Working Committee of the Congress, was to be read from every platform and accepted by the people. The manifesto which is set forth below, was at once a declaration of independence and a pledge of loyalty to the Indian National Congress and to the sacred fight for India's liberty.

> 'We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives the people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in

*From *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 10.

India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe therefore that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence.

'India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven pice (less than two-pence) per day, and of the heavy taxes we pay, 20 per cent are raised from the land revenue derived from the peasantry, and 3 per cent from the Salt Tax which falls most heavily on the poor.

'Village industries, such as hand-spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts ; and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

'Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. The British-manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Customs duties betray clear partiality for British manufactures, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses but for sustaining a highly-extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ratio, which has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

'Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us, and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and cannot return to their homes. All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships.

'Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.

'Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly, and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families from the attacks of theives, robbers and miscreants.

'We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognise, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing violence even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj.'

The reports from different parts of the country showed that the Independence Day celebrations were a great success. Unprecedented enthusiasm was exhibited everywhere and the Mahatma felt that he could go ahead with a dynamic programme. But just at this moment the practical politician in him asserted itself. While starting the civil-disobedience campaign he wanted to leave the door open for a compromise and he realised that the independence resolution of the Congress might prove to be a stumbling-block. He also felt that some of his wealthy supporters—the Indian capitalists—were alarmed at the resolutions of the Lahore Congress. Some sort of explaining away was therefore necessary, particularly in view of the fact that the word 'independence' implied severance of

the British connection. On January 30th he issued a statement in his paper, *Young India*, saying that he would be content with the 'substance of independence' and he mentioned eleven points to explain what he meant by that expression. At the same time he virtually gave up the use of the word 'independence' and substituted in its place the more elastic expression, 'substance of independence', or another expression especially coined by him—namely, 'Purna Swaraj', which he could interpret in his own way. The eleven points enunciated by him had a reassuring effect on all circles that had been alarmed by the idea of independence and they paved the way for lengthy negotiations in the months to follow. The eleven points were as follows :

1. Total prohibition.
2. Reduction of the ratio (of the rupee to the pound sterling) from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d.
3. Reduction of the land revenue to at least 50 per cent and making it subject to legislative control.
4. Abolition of the Salt Tax.
5. Reduction of the military expenditure to at least 50 per cent to begin with.
6. Reduction of the salaries of the higher graded services to one half or less so as to suit the reduced revenue.
7. Protective tariff on foreign cloth.
8. The passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill (reserving to Indian ships the coastal traffic of India).
9. Discharge of all political prisoners save those condemned for murder, or the attempt threat, by the ordinary judicial tribunal ; withdrawal of all political prosecutions ; abrogation of Section 124a (Indian Penal Code), the Regulations of 1818 and the like ; and permission to all the Indian exiles to return.
10. Abolition of the C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) or its popular control.
11. Issue of licences to use fire-arms for self-defence, subject to popular control.

By the beginning of February, the situation was favourable for the Mahatma. The Working Committee had vested him with dictatorial powers for conducting the civil-disobedience campaign. Besides the warm response given by the country on Independence Day, the members of the different Legislatures belonging to the Congress Party had submitted their resignations out of deference to the mandate of the Lahore Congress. A large section of the Moslems was of course opposed to the idea of Satyagraha and civil disobedience, and the Ali brothers openly appealed to their co-religionists not to heed the Congress appeal. Nevertheless, the Nationalist Moslems, who were by no means negligible, were wholeheartedly with the Congress and the North-West Frontier Province, a predominantly Moslem province, was going to give solid support to the coming campaign. After much searching of heart, on February 27th, the Mahatma announced his plan of campaign. The next few moves taken by him will stand out for all time as some of the most brilliant achievements of his leadership and they reveal the height to which his statesmanship can ascend in times of crises. Writing in *Young India* on February 27th, 1930, he said :

'This time on my arrest, there is to be no mute passive non-violence, but non-violence of the most active type should be set in motion so that not a single believer in non-violence as an article of faith for the purpose of achieving India's goal, should find himself free or alive at the end of the effort.... So far as I am concerned, my intention is to start the movement only through the inmates of the Ashrama (meaning—his own Ashrama) and those who have submitted to its discipline and assimilated the spirit of its methods.' Referring to the possibility of a suspension of civil disobedience in the event of an outbreak of violence, as in 1922, the Mahatma wrote : 'Whilst, therefore, every effort imaginable and possible should be made to restrain the forces of violence, civil disobedience once begun this time cannot be stopped and must not be stopped so long there is a single civil resister left free or alive.' The last statement helped to reassure all those people who had taken strong exception to the Bardoli retreat in 1922 following the manifestation of mob violence at Chauri Chaura.'

The Mahatma further announced his intention of defying the Salt Law along with seventy-eight of his chosen followers—the members of his Ashrama. He would commence a march from Ahmedabad to the sea-coast—his pilgrimage to the sea—on March 12th and after arriving there, would launch the civil-disobedience campaign. That would be the signal for the whole country to take up the movement. The Mahatma decided to start this particular campaign, because it would appeal to the country as a whole, and especially to the poor. From time immemorial the people had been accustomed to manufacture salt from seawater or from the soil. That right had been taken away from the people by the British Government. Now the Salt Law as administered is doubly iniquitous. It prohibits the people from utilising the salt which has been given by nature and forces them to import it from abroad. Moreover, the imposition of the Salt Tax serves to enhance the price of the salt which even the poorest of the poor has to buy. Explaining this point to the Viceroy in a letter dated March 2nd, he wrote :

'If you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, then on the twelfth day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashrama as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this (Salt) Tax to be the most iniquitious of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel (Salt) monopoly for so long.'

In the same letter which was a lengthy document, the Mahatma tried to explain to the Viceroy why he was being forced to resort to civil disobedience. Making it clear that the letter was not intended as a threat but was a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister, the Mahatma wrote : 'In common with many of my countrymen I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full

dominion status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting, of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy. The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and myself but to take steps to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its session in 1928.' In order to keep the door open for a compromise, in spite of the launching of the civil-disobedience campaign, the Mahatma continued : 'But the resolution of independence should cause no alarm if the word Dominion Status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For has it not been admitted by responsible British statesmen that Dominion Status is virtual independence ?'

To this letter—or ultimatum—of Mahatma Gandhi, the Viceroy sent a brief reply regretting that Mr. Gandhi intended to contravene the law. So, true to his announced programme, the Mahatma commenced his three weeks' march to Dandi, the seacoast village, where the disobedience of the Salt Law was to begin. At that time the Government were sceptical about the effect that the march would produce and they were not inclined to take him seriously. The Anglo-Indian papers began to write taunting articles and the *Statesman* of Calcutta in a leading article wrote to the effect that the Mahatma could go on boiling seawater till Dominion Status was attained. This scepticism was also shared by a section of Congressmen. Nevertheless, the march to Dandi was an event of historical importance which will rank on the same level with Napoleon's march to Paris on his return from Elba or Mussolini's march to Rome when he wanted to seize political power. Fortunately for the Mahatma, he had a wonderfully good Press within India and outside. In India, for days and days, every detail connected with the march found the widest publicity. The march on foot enabled him to rouse the entire countryside through which he passed and it also gave him time to work up the feelings of the country as a whole. If, on the other hand,

he had taken the train to Delhi from Ahmedabad, arriving there the next day, he would neither have been able to rouse the people of Gujerat, nor would he have had enough time to work up the entire nation. While the Mahatma was marching from village to village, an intense propaganda was carried on in the neighbourhood asking the people to give up service under the Crown and to prepare for the non-payment of taxes, which would be started before long. At every step the Mahatma received an unexpectedly warm welcome and that made the Government realise that the coming campaign would be a much more serious affair than they had thought at first.

On April 6th, after a purificatory bath in the sea, the Mahatma started civil disobedience by appropriating pieces of salt lying on the beach. Almost simultaneously, illegal salt manufacture was begun all over the country. Where natural conditions precluded any such campaign, disobedience of other laws was attempted. In Calcutta, for instance, the Mayor, the late Mr. J.M. Sengupta, started disobedience of the Law of Sedition by openly reading seditious literature in a public meeting. Boycott of foreign cloth was begun on an extensive scale and along with that, another campaign grew up for the boycott of British goods of all sorts. There was also an intensive campaign for the boycott of liquor and of intoxicating drugs. To enforce the boycott, picketing by Congress volunteers was organised all over India. A few weeks after the march began, the Mahatma addressed a special appeal to the women of India (*Young India*, April 10th, 1930). Therein he said : 'The impatience of some sisters to join the good fight is to me a healthy sign... In this non-violent warfare, their contribution should be much greater than men's. To call women the weaker sex is a libel.... If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior.' Proceeding, the Mahatma appealed to them to take up the picketing of liquor shops and foreign-cloth shops. The prohibition of intoxicating drugs and drinks would reduce the Government revenue by 250 millions of rupees (Rs. 13½=£1 roughly)—while the boycott of foreign cloth would stop an annual drain of nearly 600 million of rupees. He further appealed to women to devote their spare hours to spinning

with a view to stimulating the production of Khadi. In conclusion he said : 'But there is no excitement and adventure in the liquor and foreign-cloth picketing, some sisters may retort. Well, if they will put their whole heart into this agitation, they will find more than enough excitement and adventure. Before they have done with the agitation, they might even find themselves in prison. It is not improbable that they may be insulted and even injured bodily. To suffer such insult and injury would be their pride. Such suffering, if it comes to them, will hasten the end.'

The appeal was transmitted all over the country and it had a magic effect. Even the women of the most orthodox and aristocratic families were moved.[1] Everywhere women came out in their thousands to carry out the Congress mandate. Not only the Government but the people of the country as well, were taken by surprise at the manifestation. Temperance workers like Miss Mary Campbell,[2] who had worked for forty years in India, were amazed at the phenomenon. Well might foreign observers like Mr. H.N. Brailsford and Mr. George Slocombe say that if the civil-disobedience campaign had accomplished nothing else but the emancipation of the women of India, it would have fully justified itself. The energy and enthusiasm of the women stirred the men to greater effort and sacrifice. Within three weeks of the commencement of the campaign, the Government resolved to strike. On April 27th, the first emergency ordinance was promulgated called the Press Ordinance, which brought the papers under the full control of the officials. Most of the Nationalist papers ceased publication for a long period as a protest. Other ordinances followed, aiming at the suppression of the different activities of the Congress. Congress organisations were declared unlawful all over the country and an ordinance was issued, enabling the Government to confiscate the property belonging to them. The result

1. E.g., women belonging to the family of such an orthodox and highly respected Brahmin as Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya went to prison without fear or hesitation.

2. *Manchester Guardian* of June 22nd, 1931, contains her description of the awakening among the women in Delhi where alone 1,600 women were imprisoned.

of these ordinances was that the Congress could no longer function openly and many of its activities, like raising funds, recruiting volunteers, etc., had to be conducted in an underground manner. Nevertheless, the activities of the Congress instead of being paralysed by the ordinances, were further stimulated. As meetings and processions were banned everywhere, they continued to be held in defiance of the official ban. Newspapers, bulletins, leaflets were printed and distributed by Congress agencies in spite of official prohibition. In some places as in Bombay, Congress propaganda was conducted by means of the radio and the police were not able to find out from where the messages were being transmitted.

Faced by a non-violent rebellion, the Government first proceeded to make arrests. But that was of no avail. According to official figures,[3] more than sixty thousand civil resisters were cast in prison. Special prisons had to be improvised at short notice but these were filled up in no time. Besides the activities described above, which were more or less common to the whole of India, there were special activities in certain provinces. For instance, in the Central Provinces and a part of the Bombay Presidency, disobedience of forest laws was started and people began to cut down timber at will. In Gujerat, the United Provinces and certain districts of Bengal, particularly Midnapore District, non-payment of taxes and of land revenue was launched. In the North-West Frontier Province, thanks to the efforts of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, better known as Frontier Gandhi, an intensive anti-Government movement was on foot, including the non-payment of taxes. In spite of the warlike traditions of the people there, the movement was entirely non-violent. The Frontier Gandhi had organised a corps of volunteers dressed in red uniform who were called 'Khodai-Khidmadgars' or 'Servants of God.'

3. The official figures are an understimate. The writer knows from personal experience that many people were sentenced on charges like stealing, exercising intimidation, rioting, etc., though they were full-fledged Satyagrahis. As the Satyagrahis did not take any part in the Court proceedings, these charges were never challenged. The official figures are based on the returns for purely political offences.

The red-shirt volunteers were an eye-sore to the Government, because their campaign was affecting the loyalty of the people who had formerly contributed some of the finest regiments to the Indian Army. Moreover, because of the strategic position of the Frontier Province, a political movement in that part of the country was exceedingly unwelcome to the Government.

As soon as the Government realised the serious proportions which the campaign had assumed, they became entirely ruthless and brutal in their attempts at suppression. It is not possible to describe the atrocities committed by the forces of the Crown—including both the police and the military—in this connection. It is difficult to say which province suffered most, for each province had its tale of woe. In Bengal, the Midnapore District suffered most and the sufferings of the people gave birth to a terrorist movement for organising reprisals against officials. Parts of the United Provinces where the no-rent campaign was very strong, also suffered badly. In Gujerat, when the sufferings of the peasantry became unbearable, they left their homes and migrated to the neighbouring state of Baroda. Indiscriminate and brutal use of force, attack on women and wanton destruction of property—constituted some of the features of the 'illegal' measures adopted by agents of the Crown towards a people who had, on the whole, remained strictly non-violent. The usuul method of attacking Satyagrahis and unarmed citizens, including women, was with the help of powerful sticks, which being iron-shod or covered with leather, could split human skulls with case.[4] Attacks were made on helpless Satyagrahi prisoners as well.[5] Where these were not sufficient for striking

4. In most provinces the Congress agencies had to set up hospitals and to organise Ambulance Services for taking care of the injured Satyagrahis. The finest and most well-equipped hospitals were in Bombay City where the number of injured Satyagrahis was the largest of all the Indian cities.

5. Such an attack was made in the Alipore Central Jail in Calcutta in April, 1930. Among those who were attacted were the late Mr, Sengupta, then Mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Kiron Sankar Roy, Secretary. Bengal Congress Committee.' Prof. N. C. Bannerji, Mr. S.R. Bakshi, Editor of *Liberty*, the writer and a large number of fellow prisoners. The writer, who was in the front rank, was during the course of the

terror, shooting was occasionally resorted to. In most provinces such shooting incidents occurred occasionally, but the most diabolical incident took place at Peshawar (the capital of the North-West Frontier Province) on April 23rd, where the number of people shot and killed on one day went up to several hundred. The facts are roughly these. There was a peaceful demonstration following the arrests of some local leaders. The authorities lost their heads and sent some armoured cars to disperse the crowd that was by that time moving homewards. The armoured cars, full of soldiers, rushed full tilt into the crowd without warning from behind, killing three people on the spot and wounding a large number. Thereupon the crowd is reported to have set fire to the cars. Soldiers were at once rushed to the spot and ordered to open fire. But the crowd did not run away; hundreds of them stood their ground and faced the bullets. When the facts became known, the public demanded an inquiry which the Government refused. Then the Working Committee of the Congress appointed a Committee with Mr. Vithalbhai Patel (who by then had resigned the Presidentship of the Assembly) as Chairman to inquire into and report on the facts. This Committee was not allowed to proceed to the Frontier Province. It had therefore to assemble in Punjab at a place nearest to the Frontier Province and collect evidence there. As soon as the report of the Committee was published, it was banned by the Government. Nevertheless, through the efforts of Congress organisations, wide publicity was given to it.

The only redeeming feature of the Peshawar episode was the refusal of a company of Garhwali soldiers to open fire on the unarmed crowd.[6] After their refusal they were at once

attack thrown down and rendered unconscious for more than one hour. The public demanded an inquiry which the Government refused. At the end, Government appointed a Medical Board consisting of Dr. B.C. Roy and Lt.-Col. Denham White, who examined the injured prisoners and issued a report on their physical condition.

6. The Garhwalis are recruited from the mountainous portion of the United Provinces bordering on the Himalayas. Together with the Gurkhas of Nepal, the Sikhs of the Punjab and the Pathans of the Frontier Provinces—they form the pick of the Indian Army.

disarmed, placed before a court-martial and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In most of the provinces where atrocities were perpetrated, local committees were appointed by the public to inquire into and report on those incidents. To publish those reports would require a big volume and would be outside the scope of this book. It would not, however, be out of place to quote some lines from the second letter[7] addressed by the Mahatma to the Viceroy early in May on the eve of his arrest, which was published in *Young India* on May 8th, 1930.

'I had hoped that the Government would fight the civil resisters in a civilised manner. I could have had nothing to say if in dealing with the civil resisters the Government had satisfied itself with applying the ordinary process of law. Instead, whilst the known leaders have been dealt with more or less according to the legal formality, the rank and file have been often savagely and, in some cases, even indecently assaulted. Had these been isolated cases, they might have been overlooked. But accounts have come to me from Bengal, Bihar, Utkal, the United Provinces, Delhi and Bombay, confirming the experiences of Gujerat, of which I have ample evidence at my disposal. In Karachi, Peshawar and Madras the firing would appear to have been unprovoked and unnecessary. Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed, for the purpose of making volunteers give up salt which is valueless to the Government but precious to the volunteers. At Mathura an Assistant Magistrate is said to have snatched the National flag from a ten-year-old boy. The crowd that demanded restoration of the flag, thus illegally seized, is reported to have been mercilessly beaten back. That the flag was subsequently restored, betrayed a guilty conscience. In Bengal, there seem to have been only a few prosecutions and assaults about salt, but unthinkable cruelties are said to have been practised in the act of snatching flags from

7. It is not quite sure if this letter actually reached the hands of the Viceroy.

volunteers. Paddy fields are reported to have been burnt, eatables forcibly taken. A vegetable market in Gujerat has been raided because the dealers would not sell vegetables to officials. These acts have taken place in front of crowds who have submitted without retaliation in pursuance of the Congress mandate. Yet this is only the fifth week of the struggle !'

An English disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Miss Madeleine Slade, paid a visit to Bulsar in Gujerat on June 6th to see with her own eyes how the Satyagrahi volunteers engaged in the non-violent raid on the Dharsana Salt Depot were being treated by the police. She published her report in *Young India* in the issue of June 12th, 1930. Therein she stated that she had found evidence of the following injuries perpetrated on the Satyagrahi volunteers :

1. Lathi[8] blown on head, chest, stomach and joints.
2. Thrusts with lathis in private parts, abdominal regions.
3. Stripping of men naked before beating.
4. Tearing off loin cloths and thrusting of sticks into anus.
5. Pressing and squeezing of the testicles till a man becomes unconscious.
6. Dragging of wounded men by legs and arms, often beating them the while.
7. Throwing of wounded men into thorn hedges or into salt water.
8. Riding of horses over men as they lie or sit on the ground.
9. Thrusting of pins and thorns into men's bodies, sometimes even when they are unconscious.
10. Beating of men after they have become unconscious, and other vile things too many to relate, besides foul language and blasphemy, calculated to hurt as much as possible the most sacred feelings of the Satyagrahis.

8. A lathi is an iron-shod heavy stick.

To turn now to other events. April 1930 was a month bristling with sensational incidents. Every day seemed to bring forth some new development and no part of the country was free from it. The Indian Legislative Assembly did not have a quiet time either, though the Congress members were out of it. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who was leading the Independent Party there, assumed the leadership of the opposition. Early in April, he walked out of the Assembly together with his followers, as a protest against the manner in which the Government had forced on the Assembly the principle of Imperial Preference in connection with the Cotton Tariff Bill. Two days later he resigned from the Assembly together with some other members of his Party. This was followed by the resignation of the President of the Assembly, Mr. V.J. Patel. He addressed two letters to the Viceroy in which he stated that after the resignation of the Congress Party and of Pandit Malaviya's Independent Party, the Assembly had lost its representative character and in the circumstances, he felt that his place was with his people. He also protested against what seemed to him a change of front on the part of the Government on the constitutional question.

Another incident of a totally different character took place in April in the easternmost part of the country. That was the Armoury Raid in Chittagong in East Bengal. A number of young men belonging to a local revolutionary party led by Mr. Surjya Kumar Sen, raided the Chittagong Armoury. They shot dead the guards on duty, took possession of the premises, removed what weapons they could and destroyed the rest. Thereafter they retired to the hills and continued guerilla warfare for some days. Ultimately they were overpowered, the majority of them being killed and the rest being forced to fly for their safety. Members of this party who were at large, continued terroristic activities for a long time.[9] About this

9 The first batch of young men arrested after the raid were sent up for trial in what is known as the Chittagong Armoury Raid Case and after a long trial, the majority of them were sentenced to transportation for life and sent over to the Andamans Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The leader of the group. Surjya Kumar Sen, evaded arrest for a long time but was subsequently arrested and hanged after trial. Chittagong has since 1930 been under a form of martial law.

time the Afridi tribes on the North-West Frontier grew restless and began to give trouble to the British Government.

Early in May, the Mahatma wrote his second letter to the Viceroy (part of which has been quoted above), in which he said :

'Dear Friend,

> 'God willing it is my intention to set out for and reach there with my companions on... and demand possession of the Salt Works....It is possible for you to prevent this "raid", as it has been playfully and mischievously called, in three ways :
>
> 1. By removing the Salt Tax.
> 2. By arresting me and my party unless the country can, as I hope it will, replace everyone taken away.
> 3. By sheer goondaism (*i.e.* terrorism) unless every head broken is replaced, as I hope it will be....'
>
> *Young India*, May 8th, 1930.

But before the Mahatma could carry out his intention he was seized by the custodians of law on May 5th, 1930 and cast in prison without trial under an old regulation, called Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827.

The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi caused public excitement all over India, but there was no outbreak of violence except in one town, *viz.* Sholapur in Bombay Presidency. In that town with a large industrial population, the people rose in revolt and overpowered the local police. They took possession of the town, hoisted the national flag and declared their independence. They held the town for some time but troops were rushed in from Bombay and the authority of the British Raj was once again restored. Martial law was then established and this was followed by a reign of terror. During the martial law regime, various restrictions and humiliations were inflicted on the people. For instance, people were not allowed to wear

Gandhi caps[10] in public, the national flag was pulled down wherever it was seen, etc. Those who were suspected of taking a leading part in the disturbances were sent up for trial. Some of them were hanged and others sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

While these stirring events were taking place and the people were thinking in terms of independence, the 1927 programme of the Government was being translated into action. The Reports of the Provincial Committees and of the Indian Central Committee, appointed to assist the Simon Commission, had been published before the end of 1929. An auxiliary committee of the Simon Commission presided over by Sir Philip Hartog that had been appointed to report on the growth of education in India, had also issued its report in October 1929. Only the report of the Simon Commission had been held up, possibly because of the Labour Party coming into power in June 1929. However, on June 7th, 1930, the report of the Commission was issued. The report met with vehement opposition from all quarters, so reactionary were its recommendations. Even the Indian Liberals demanded that the Simon Report should not form the basis of discussion at the Round Table Conference. And since the Indian Legislative Assembly rejected the Simon Report *in toto*, even in the absence of the Nationalist members—the Government had no option but to agree to the demand. At a time when the breach between the Government and the Congress appeared to be beyond repair, an enterprising British journalist arrived on the scene to try his wits. By clever manyeuvring, Mr. George Slocombe, representative of the *Daily Herald*, managed to get permission to interview Mahatma Gandhi in Yervada Prison in Poona on May 19th and 20th, 1930, with a view to ascertaining from him the conditions on which he would be prepared to call off the civil-disobedience movement. The Mahatma said that the movement could not be stopped without a definite guarantee of the 'substance of independence'.

10. White caps made of Khadi are called Gandhi caps. They are generally worn by members of the Congress Party.

accepted, it would render possible a general measure of conciliation which would entail simultaneous calling off of the civil-disobedience movement, the cessation of the Government's present repressive policy and a generous measure of amnesty for political prisoners, and would be followed by the participation of the Congress in the Round Table Conference on terms to be mutually agreed upon.'

This statement was sent by Mr. Slocombe to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M.R. Jayakar, with a view to interesting them in the cause of peace. Both of them took up the matter enthusiastically and waited upon Lord Irwin for the purpose in the early part of July. They obtained permission to interview Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in prison. On July 23rd and 24th they met the Mahatma in Yervada Prison and with his memorandum, they met the two Pandits in Naini Prison near Allahabad on July 28th. The Pandits said among other things that no final word could be given without personal consultation with Mahatma Gandhi. With the Nehrus' memorandum, Mr. Jayakar again saw the Mahatma on July 31st. Orders were then given for the Pandits to be taken from Naini Prison to Yervada Prison. On August 13, 14th, 15th, consultations took place in Yervada Prison at which were present the two peacemakers, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. A joint statement was issued by the Congress leaders on August 15th, stating that no solution would be acceptable to them or to the Congress which did not guarantee the following points :

1. India's right to secede at will.
2. Grant of a national government responsible to the people including control of defence and finance.
3. India's right to submit to an impartial scrutiny of the so called public debt of India.

This statement was duly communicated to the Viceroy and on August 28th, 1930, Lord Irwin sent a reply to the two peacemakers saying that he felt that it was impossible to hold

any discussion on the basis of the joint statement of August 15th. Thus the peace negotiations failed. The peacemakers made a further attempt by interviewing the leaders in Naini and Yervada Prisons, but the leaders opined that there was an unbridgeable gulf between the Government and the Congress.

Soon after the final break in the negotiations, Pandit Motilal Nehru was suddenly released from prison on September 8th, because he had fallen seriously ill. He remained alive for five months only, but during this period, in spite of extreme ill-health, he spent the greater part of his time and energy in trying to stiffen the movement throughout the country. During his stay in Calcutta, he also devoted much of his time to a settlement of the Bengal dispute. Immediately after the Lahore Congress, he had visited Calcutta in order to inquire into the election complaints preferred against the Executive of the Bengal Congress Committee (of which the writer was the President), by the party of the late Mr. J.M. Sengupta. He had given his verdict in favour of the former, but after his departure, differences broke out again, with the result that at the elections to the Calcutta Municipality, the two Congress groups put forward two separate sets of candidates. When the civil-disobedience movement was started, two separate committees came into existence for conducting the civil-disobedience campaign in Bengal. A few months later when the election of the Mayor of Calcutta was to take place, one party put up the outgoing Mayor, the late Mr. Sengupta, while the other party put up the writer—and the latter won. These dissensions lowered the prestige of the Congress to a large extent. However, through Pandit Motilal Nehru's influence, the two civil-disobedience committees were amalgamated and other differences were 'patched up—so that when he left Bengal in December, the prestige and strength of the Congress were restored to some extent.

While the above events were taking place, the bureaucracy were pursuing their own plan. In June, the report of the Simon Commission was published and on September 20th, the Government sent their despatch to London, as a preliminary to the discussions of the Round Table Conference. Some of

the principal points in the recommendations of the Commission were as follows :

1. The new Constitution should, as far as possible, contain within itself provision for its own development.
2. The ultimate Constitution of India must be federal.
3. Burma should be excluded from the new Constitution.
4. There should be full autonomy in the provinces including the department of Law and Order—but the Governor should, on the administrative side, be given overriding powers in certain matters like internal security, safeguarding of all communities, etc.
5. The presence of British troops and British officers in Indian regiments will be essential for many years. The Commander-in-Chief should not be a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and he should not sit in the Legislature.
6. The Provincial Legislative Councils should be enlarged.
7. The Lower House of the Central Legislature should be called the Federal Assembly. It should be enlarged and be elected by the Provincial Councils. The Upper House—the Council of State, should remain such as it is at present.
8. A Provincial Fund should be constituted for ensuring adequate resources to the provinces without infringing their autonomy.
9. The Governor-General should select and appoint the members of his Cabinet. He should be the actual and active head of the Government and in some matters his powers should be enlarged. (The Commission did not recommend the introduction of responsibility at the centre).
10. The High Courts should be under the administrative control of the Government of India.
11. The functions and membership of the Council of the Secretary of State for India should be reduced.

Some of the main points in the Government of India's Despatch were as follows :

1. The following subjects should be under the control of the British Parliament : defence, foreign relations, internal security, financial obligations, financial stability, protection of minorities and of the rights of services recruited by the Secretary of State, the prevention of unfair economic and commercial discrimination.

2. The proposal of the Statutory Commission for the abolition of diarchy and the introduction of responsible government (including the department of law and order) in the provinces was approved.

3. The Governor should be given the discretion to appoint officials as Ministers.

4. In Madras, Bombay, Punjab, Central Provinces and Assam, the Legislature should have a single chamber. In Bengal, the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa there should be two chambers.

5. The separation of Burma was approved in principle.

6. The members of the Governor-General's Executive Council should be appointed by the Governor-General himself. The Governor-General's Cabinet while being of a 'unitary' character and not responsible to the Legislature, should consist of some elected members of the Legislature who could command some support from that body.

On November 12th, 1930, the first session of the Round Table Conference was held in London under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister. It consisted of eighty-nine members, sixteen from the British parties, sixteen from the Indian States and fifty-seven from British India. The Congress Party was of course unrepresented. After the preliminary sittings of the Conference, several committees were appointed to consider the problems in detail. There was the

Federal Structure Committee with Lord Sankey as Chairman, the Franchise and Services Committee with Sir William Jowitt as Chairman, the Burma Committee with Earl Russell as Chairman, the Defence Committee with Mr. J.H. Thomas as Chairman, the Minorities Committee with Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as Chairman etc. The fact that the representatives of the Indian States were invited to the Conference made it evident at the very outset that the British Government were anxious to bring the Indian States within the future Indian Constitution. The first step in that connection had been taken by Sir John Simon when he wrote to the British Prime Minister for an enlargement of the terms of reference with a view to including the question of the relations between British India and the Indian States. The Simon Commission also reported that the ultimate Constitution of India must be a federal one. The only question that remained undecided was as to when it would be possible to bring about a federation of British India and the Indian States. In the circumstances it was no surprise when on November 17th, at a sitting of the Round Table Conference, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaneer, welcomed such a federation. The whole idea had been talked over and discussed, months before the Round Table Conference met. The proposal of federation was one of the cleverest moves adopted by the British Government at this stage, and it is a pity that elderly politicians like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M.R. Jayakar did not see through the game at once, though Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Mr. M.A. Jinnah did feel suspicious towards the idea at the beginning. The Government of India in their despatch of September 20th, had merely mentioned the safeguards—that is, the subjects that should be retained under the control of His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament. But what about the subjects that were to be within the purview of the Indian Legislature? British interests demanded that there should be a Conservative element in that body that could be trusted to checkmate the radical forces in British India. And what could be better than to bring the Indian Princes in, so that they might act as a dead weight in the Central Legislature? This rapprochement between the British Government and the Indian Princes had begun as early as 1922, as we have already seen in Chapter 2,

AFTER THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT*

Friends and comrades ! Today we are meeting under the shadow of a great tragedy.** Our minds are too full to speak. At such a critical moment in the history of our country, you have asked me to preside over your conference. For this I feel grateful to you.

We are concerned here with the consideration of that socio-economic structure and body politic which will help to foster manhood and develop character and the will to translate into reality the highest ideal of collective humanity. We are also interested here in investigating the methods that will bring about the earliest attainment of this goal. I am led to the conclusion that the principles which should form the basis of our collective life are justice, equality, freedom, discipline and love. Therefore, in order to ensure equality we must get rid of bondage of every kind—social, economic and political—and we must become fully and wholly free.

To summarize what I have said, I want a Socialist Republic in India. The message I have to give is one of complete, all-round, undiluted freedom. Until the radical or revolutionary elements are stirred up we cannot get freedom, and we cannot stir up the revolutionary elements among us except by inspiring them with a new message which comes from the heart and goes straight to the heart.

The fundamental weakness in the Congress policy and programme is that there is a great deal of vagueness and mental reservation in the minds of the leaders. Their programme is based not on radicalism but on adjustments—adjustments between landlord and the tenant, between the capitalist and the wage-earner, between the so-called upper classes and the so-called depressed classes, between men and women.

*Presidential address at the Karachi conference of the All-India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, March 27, 1931.

**Execution of Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries.

I do not believe that the Congress programme can win freedom for India. The programme by which I believe freedom can be achieved is :

(1) Organization of peasants and workers on a socialistic programme.

(2) Organization of youth into Volunteer Corps under strict discipline.

(3) Abolition of the caste system and the eradication of social and religious superstitions of all kinds.

(4) Organization of women's associations for getting our womenfolk to accept the gospel and work out the new programme.

(5) Intensive programme for boycott of British goods.

(6) Creation of new literature for propagating the new cult and programme.

Before referring to the Gandhi-Irwin truce, I must say something about the Lahore executions. Bhagat Singh was a symbol of the spirit of revolt which has taken possession of the country from one end to the other. That spirit is unconquerable, and the flame which that spirit has lit up will not die. India may have to lose many more sons before she can hope to be free. These recent executions are to me sure indications that there has been no change of heart on the side of the Government and the time for an honourable settlement has not arrived as yet.

With regard to the truce embodied in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, I may say that it is exceedingly unsatisfactory and highly disappointing. What pains me most is the consideration that at the time this Pact was drawn up we actually had more strength than would appear from the contents of the document. The Pact has inherent weaknesses, but now that the truce is an accomplished fact the question before us is what is to be done at this stage. I do not for one moment question the patriotism of those who are responsible for the truce terms. Consequently the best course for us will be to do some positive

work which will strengthen the nation and the nation's demand. For this purpose I have outlined my programme which the more radical sections among our countrymen will do well to adopt and carry out. This will avoid unnecessary conflict with the Congress leaders at a time when such conflict may tend to weaken the people and strengthen the Government. Above all, let us have restraint and self-control even when we have to criticise others. We shall lose nothing by being courteous and restrained, and we may gain much.

India is the key-stone to the world edifice and a free India spells the destruction of Imperialism throughout the world. Let us, therefore, rise to the occasion and make India free so that humanity may be saved.

OUR NEEDS AND OUR DUTIES*

If we analyse the secret of the influence and strength of the Indian National Congress today, we come down to three factors :

(1) the large membership of the Congress,
(2) the organisation and discipline of the Congress, and
(3) the spirit of service and sacrifice demonstrated by Congressmen during the last fifty three years.

Since its birth in 1885, the Congress has made considerable headway and has brought the Indian people nearer to their goal of Swaraj or Independence. But though we are within sight of power, there is yet a struggle ahead of us. If we desire that this struggle should be the last hurdle in our march towards freedom, we have to do three things. The membership of the Congress should be so enlarged as to embrace the vast majority of our countrymen. Our organisation and discipline have to be perfected and last, but not least, we have to be prepared for greater suffering and sacrifice.

In this short article, I desire to deal mainly with the first of the above three requisites.

*Bose's article in *National Front*, October, 1938.

In a political organisation which uses the method of non-violence, as opposed to armed struggle, the question of numbers assumes great importance. The ultimate weapon in non-violent struggle is Satyagraha or mass civil disobedience which presupposes the rallying of the masses under one banner. In proportion, as the Congress has been able to draw the masses to its fold, it increased its influence and strength.

When the first session of the Congress was held in Bombay in 1885, only a handful of middle and upper class intellectuals assembled on the occasion. Today a session of the Congress can draw as many people as it can accommodate.

There is no doubt that Mahatma Gandhi was the first leader to bring the Congress into intimate contact with the masses of this country. I do not propose to attempt an analysis of the personality and programme of Mahatma Gandhi which enabled him to attract the masses towards the Congress is an unprecedented manner. The process which Mahatma Gandhi set on foot has now to be brought to fruition. How can this be done ? There are so many false and extraneous issues which tend to mislead the dump millions, to create differences and dissensions and to emphasise fissiparous tendencies. Our weapon against them is a two-fold one—political and socio-economic. On the political side we must stress the nationalist appeal as against the lure of narrow communalism.

We must all learn to think and feel in terms of the nation and not in terms of a group or sect. On the socio-economic side, we must open the eyes of our illiterate countrymen to the fact that despite differences of religion, caste or languages, our economic problems and grievances are the same and can be solved only when we are free and have a national Government, truly representative of the will of the people.

It is absolutely necessary to strees the economic issues which cut across communal divisions and barriers. The problems of poverty and unemployment, of illiteracy and disease, of taxation and indebtedness affect alike the Hindus and

Muslims and other sections of the people and it should be easy to explain to our masses that their solution depends on the prior solution of the political problem, *i.e.*, on the establishment of a national, popular and democratic Government.

Scientific mass propaganda on the above lines, if persisted in, is sure to bring the people of all religions and castes under the banner of Swaraj. When the masses come to the Congress in their thousands and lacs, the influence and strength of the Congress will increase proportionately. The only problems that will then remain will be to organise and discipline this vast membership and prepare them for the suffering and sacrifice which the future struggle for Swaraj will involve.

There is, however, a relevant question to which I should like to refer here. The new members that will come into the Congress as a result of scientific propaganda should not be like dumb-driven cattle. They should be live human beings, with plenty of initiative. If the individual members lack initiative, the Committees which they will form will also lack dynamism. In that event, democracy may prove to be a failure. The success of democracy in India depends on the initiative of the individual and on the dynamism of the subordinate Congress Committees. If the initiative has to come from the top and not from the bottom, democracy may be well-nigh reduced to totalitarianism. But that is not what we are working for. Let us, therefore, remember that individual initiative has to be unceasingly encouraged and developed and subordinate Congress Committees have to be maintained in a state of eternal vigilance and activity.

Our needs and our duties at the present time are simple indeed. But to fulfil them requires herculean efforts. There is no time to lose ; let us, therefore, put our shoulders to the wheel at once.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE*

As the life of the present British House of Commons will come to an end in 1936, the Constitution Bill for India will

*From *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 19.

certainly be put through Parliament before the next General Election. There is at present a keen controversy going on in England between the supporters of the White Paper and the Conservative Diehards led by Mr. Winston Churchill. For India, the controversy has no interest whatsoever. As we have already seen, the White Paper contains precious little, and few people in India will be sorry if the scheme is whittled down further, as seems likely, or suffers complete shipwreck. What really interests India in connection with the White Paper is the fact that it leaves no room for co-operation for those who may feel tired of the prolonged struggle and would like to settle down to some useful, constructive work. The policy of the Government, therefore, will help to keep up the present opposition.

The Government hope to stifle or ignore the Nationalist opposition in the country with the help of the minorities—the Moslems, the Depressed Classes, the Indian Christians and the Anglo-Indians. But will they succeed ? It is probable that for a time a large section of different minority communities in India will be under official influence. This will be their return for the concessions made to them in the Communal Award. But this position cannot last long. The Communal Award has at best given these communities better representation in the Legislatures under the new Constitution. But the new Constitution will give no power to the Indian people as a whole or to any section of them. It will not, therefore, take the representatives of different communities in the Legislatures long to realise that though the Government gave them seats, they did not give them power. Seats in the Legislatures are only meant for a few. These few can retain their hold over the general public, only if they can do something for the betterment of the entire community. That will not be possible, since no power will be actually transferred to the people. When the different communities realise that their representatives are not able to do anything for them, they will cease taking any interest in the Legislatures and popular discontent against the Constitution will begin to grow. This discontent will be further augmented by the economic crisis in India—and even if an improvement takes place in Great Britain or in any other country, it will not

have any repercussions in India. The Indian economic crisis is only partly an effect of the world crisis. It is also an independent phenomenon, being due to a large extent to exploitation of India's resources and of the Indian market by foreign, and epecially British, industries and also to her inability to modernise her industrial system, in order to cope with foreign competition. An improvement in the Indian economic situation will necessitate, therefore, not only an improvement in the world economic si tuation, but also a modernisation of India's industrial system.

There are other reasons why the help of the Indian minority communities will not be of much ava l to Great Britain. Firstly, among the Moslems there is a large and influential section who are Nationalists and who are as anti-Government as the Nationalist Hindus. Their influence is not likely to suffer eclipse, but will probably increase in the days to come. Secondly, among the Depressed Classes, the majority even today are supporters of the Congress. The Congress propaganda to abolish untouchability altogether will certainly bring more members of the Depressed Classes into the fold of the Congress. Thirdly, the Indian Christian community can no longer be labelled as pro-Government In their annual conferences they have repeatedly condemned separate electorate and advocated joint electorate. In recent years there has been a remarkable change of feeling among the younger generation of Indian Christians On the religious side they have begun to resent the domination of European Christians and they demand a national church for themselves. On the political side, the younger generation of Indian Christians is becoming rapidly pro-Congress. In 1930, when the writer was in prison in the Alipore Central Jail in Calcutta, among his fellow prisoners there was a fine set of young Indian Christians who had joined the civil-disobedience movement, and they were typical of the awakening in their community. Fourthly, so far as the Anglo-Indians are concerned, a distinct change is visible. Till recently they were the loyal supporters of the Government and the henchmen of the British They looked upon England as their spiritual home and themselves as British in everything except in the pigment of their skin. The Government, too, gave them

special facilities and privileges—not granted to Indians. But things are changing now. Anglo-Indians have been made statutory natives of India under the law of the land. The leader of the community, Lieut.-Col. Sir H. Gidney, addressed an appeal to his community the other day asking them to look upon India as their home and to feel proud of India. Feeling is steadily growing in the community that they should no longer try to hobnob with Britishers, but should throw in their lot with children of the soil. Fifthly, so far as the non-official Britishers are concerned, they can hardly do anything more for the Government in suppressing the Nationalist movement. There has long been close co-operation between the Government and the non-official British community in this matter—but in spite of that, the Nationalist movement has been making headway. In the days to come, the influence of the non-official British community is likely to diminish rather than increase. In Bombay, for instance, business supremacy has already passed into the hands of the Indians. In 1932, the British firms in Bombay had to pass a resolution, expressing sympathy with the Nationalist movement in order to save themselves from a crushing and effective boycott. The Ottawa Pact and the Indo British Textile Agreement represent the last attempt of the non-official British community to maintain the *status quo*—but how long can they stem the rising tide of Nationalism ?

Thus, according to human calculation, it appears certain that the Government will be able to permanently weaken the nationalist forces in India by placating the minorities. No popular upheaval is, however, possible till the promulgation of the new reforms. Thereafter it will take a few years—probably two or three—for the people to be completely disillusioned. Then there will be the beginning of another mass upheaval. What exact form this upheaval will take, it is difficult to determine at this stage.

During the next few years the inner conditions of the Congress will be somewhat unsettled, that is to say, no party will be sufficiently strong to be able to suppress the others

The Socialist Party in the form it has assumed today—cannot make much headway. The composition of the Party is not homogeneous and some of its ideas are out-of-date. But the instinct that has urged the formation of the Party is right. Out of this Left-Wing revolt there will ultimately emerge a new full-fledged party with a clear ideology, programme and plan of action. It is not possible at this stage to visualise the details of this Party's programme and plan of action—but one may attempt to give the bare outlines :

1. The Party will stand for the interests of the masses, that is, of the peasants, workers, etc., and not for the vested interests, that is, the landlords, capitalists and money-lending classes.
2. It will stand for the complete political and economic liberation of the Indian people.
3. It will stand for a Federal Government for India as the ultimate goal, but will believe in a strong Central Government with dictatorial powers for some years to come, in order to put India on her feet.
4. It will believe in a sound system of state-planning for the reorganisation of the agricultural and industrial life of the country.
5. It will seek to build up a new social structure on the basis of the village communities of the past, that were ruled by the village 'Panch' and will strive to break down the existing social barriers like caste.
6. It will seek to establish a new monetary and credit system ih the light of the theories and the experiments that have been and are current in the modern world.
7. It will seek to abolish landlordism and introduce a uniform land-tenure system for the whole of India.
8. It will not stand for a democracy in the Mid-Victorian sense of the term, but will believe in government by a strong party bound together by millitary discipline, as the only means of holding Indias together and prevent-

ing a chaos, when Indians are free and are thrown entirely on their own resources.

9. It will not restrict itself to a campaign inside India but will resort to international propaganda[1] also, in order to strengthen India's case for liberty, and will attempt to utilise the existing international organisations.

10. It will endeavour to unite all the radical organisations under a national executive so that whenever any action is taken, there will be simultaneous activity on many fronts.

A question which is on everybody's lips in Europe is: 'What is the future of Communism in India ?' In this connection it is worth-while quoting the expressed opinion of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,[2] whose popularity in India today is, according to the writer, second only to that of Mahatma Gandhi. In a Press statement issued on December 18th, 1933, he said : 'I do believe that fundamentally the choice before the world today is one between some form of Communism and some form of Fascism and I am all for the former, that is Communism. I dislike Fascism intensely and indeed I do not think it is anything more than a crude and brutal effort of the present capitalist order to preserve itself at any coast. There is no middle road between Fascism and Communism. One has to choose between the two and I choose the Communist ideal. In regard to the methods and approach to this ideal, I may not

1. In 1920, when Mahatma Gandhi took charge of the Congress, he abolished the Congress Committee in London and its paper *India* which represented the only organ for propaganda for India outside her shores. Recently a change seems to have come over him. In January 1932, just before his arrest, the Congress Working Committee, at his instance, issued an appeal to the nations of the world for sympathy for India in her struggle for liberty.

2. It should be made perfectly clear that this is Pandit Nehru's personal opinion and not the opinion of the Indian National Congress. Nor does his popularity imply that his views find acceptance among the rank and file of the Congress—just as Mahatma Gandhi's unprecedented popularity does not imply that his followers wear loin-cloth or drink goat's milk.

agree with everything that the orthodox Communists have done. I think that these methods will have to adapt themselves to changing conditions and may very in different countries. But I do think that the basic ideology of Communism and its scientific interpretation of history is sound'.

The view expressed here is, according to the writer, fundamentally wrong. Unless we are at the end of the process of evolution or unless we deny evolution altogether, there is no reason to hold that our choice is restricted to two alternatives. Whether one believes in the Hegelian or in the Bergsonian or any other theory of evolution—in no case need we think that creation is at an end. Considering everything, one is inclined to hold that the next phase in world-history will produce a synthesis between Communism and Fascism. And will it be a surprise if that synthesis is produced in India ? The view has been expressed in the Introduction that, in spite of India's geographical isolation, the Indian awakening is organically connected with the march of progress in other parts of the world and facts and figures have been mentioned to substantiate that view. Consequently, there need to be no surprise if an experiment, of importance to the whole world, is made in India—especially when we have seen with our own eyes that another experiment (that of Mahatma Gandhi) made in India has roused profound interest all over the world.

In spite of the antithesis between Communism and Fascism, there are certain traits common to both. Both Communism and Fascism believe in the supremacy of the State over the individual. Both denounce parliamentarian democracy. Both believe in party rule. Both believe in the dictatorship of the party and in the ruthless suppression of all dissenting minorities. Both believe in a planned industrial reorganisation of the country. These common traits will form the basis of the new synthesis. That synthesis is called by the writer 'Samyavada'—an Indian word, which means literally 'the doctrine of synthesis or equality'. It will be India's task to work out this synthesis.

There are several reasons why Communism will not be adopted in India. Firstly, Communism today has no sympathy with Nationalism in any form and the Indian movement is a Nationalist movement—a movement for the national liberation of the Indian people. (Lenin's thesis on the relation between Communism and Nationalism seems to have been given the go-by since the failure of the last Chinese Revolution). Secondly, Russia is now on her defensive and has little interest in provoking a world revolution, though the Communist International may still endeavour to keep up appearances. The recent pacts between Russia and other capitalist countries and the written or unwritten conditions inherent in such pacts, as also her membership of the League of Nations, have seriously compromised the position of Russia as a revolutionary power. Moreover, Russia is too preoccupied in her internal industrial reorganisation and in her preparations for meeting the Japanese menace on her eastern flank and is too anxious to maintain friendly relations with the Great Powers, to show any active interest in countries like India. Thirdly, while many of the economic ideas of Communism would make a strong appeal to Indians, there are other ideas which will have a contrary effect. Owing to the close association between the Church and the State in Russian history and to the existence of an organised Church. Communism in Russia has grown to be anti-religious and atheistic. In India, on the contrary, there being no organised Church among the Indians and there being no association between the Church and the State, there is no feeling against religion as such.[3] Fourthly, the materialistic interpretation of history which seems to be a cardinal point in Communist theory will not find unqualified acceptance in India, even among those who would be disposed to accept the economic contents of Communism. Fifthly, while Communist theory has made certain remarkable contributions in the domain of economics (for instance the idea of state-planning), it is weak in other aspects. For instance, so far as the monetary problem is concerned, Communism has made no new contribution, but has merely followed traditional economics.

3. Further, in India a national awakening is in most cases heralded by a religious reformation and a cultural renaissance.

Recent experiences, however, indicate that the monetary problem of the world is still far from baing satisfactorily solved.

While, therefore, it would be safe to predict that India will not become a new edition of Soviet Russia, one may say with equal strength that all the modern socio-political movements and experiments in Europe and in America will have considerable influence on India's development. Of late, India has been taking and in future will continue to take, more and more interest in what goes on in the outside world.

To come back to the Congress. The present controversy between Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is of passing interest as the issue is a very minor one. Neither the Congress Nationalist Party not the official Congress Parliamentary Party has a role to play in future, because both of them are heterogeneous parties without any clear ideology or programme. It only remains to consider the future of Gandhism in India. It has been urged sometimes that Gandhism is an alternative to Communism. This idea is, in the opinion of writer, erroneous. Mahatma Gandhi has given the country (and may be, the world) a new method—the method of passive-resistance or Satyagraha or non-violent non-co-operation. He has not given his country or humanity a new programme of social reconstruction as Communism has—and the alternative to Communism can be only another theory of social reconstruction. No doubt the Mahatma has condemned the 'machine civilisation' of the modern world and has eulogised the good old days when men were content with their cottage industries and their wants were few. But that is a personal belief or idiosyncrasy. Whenever he has expounded the contents of Swaraj, he has spoken in the language of Mid-Victorian Parliamentarian Democracy and of traditional capitalist economics. The 'Eleven Points' which he enunciated in 1930 as connoting his 'substance of independence', will be unreservedly accepted by any Indian industrial magnate. One could, therefore, say that the Mahatma does not intend pulling down the modern industrial structure if he were to get political mastery over his country, nor does he desire to com-

pletely industrialise the country. His programme is one of reform—he is fundamentally a reformist and not a revolutionary. He would leave the existing social and economic structute much as it is today (he would not even abolish the army altogether) and would content himself with removing the glaring injustices and inequalities against which his moral sense revolts. There are millions of his countrymen who accept his method owing to the pressure of circumstances, but not his programme of reconstruction, and who would like to build up quite a different India if they had the power. As has been already indicated, the future of India ultimately lies with a party with a clear ideology, programme and plan of action—a party that will not only fight for and win freedom, but will put into effect the entire programme of post-War reconstruction—a party that will break the isolation that has been India's curse and bring her into the comity of nations—firm in the belief that the fate of India is indissolubly linked up with the fate of humanity.

THE ROLE OF MAHATMA GANDHI IN INDIAN HISTORY*

The role which a man plays in history depends partly on his physical and mental equipment, and partly on the environment and the needs of times in which he is born. There is something in Mahatma Gandhi, which appeals to the mass of the Indian people. Born in another country he might have been a complete misfit. What, for instance, would he have done in a country like Russia or Germany or Italy? His doctrine of non-violence would have led him to the cross or to the mental hospital. In India it is different. His simple life, his vegetarian diet, his goat's milk, his day of silence every week, his habit of squatting on the floor instead of sitting on a chair, his loin-cloth—in fact everything connected with him—has marked him out as one of the eccentric Mahatmas of old and has brought him nearer to his people. Wherever he may go, even the poorest of the poor feels that he is a product of

*From *The Indian Struggle*, Chapter 16.

the Indian soil—bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. When the Mahatma speaks, he does so in a language that they comprehend not in the language of Herbert Spencer and Edmund Burke, as for instance Sir Surendra Nath Banerji would have done, but in that of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramayana.* When he talks to them about Swaraj, he does not dilate on the virtues of provincial autonomy or federation, he reminds them of the glories of *Ramarajya* (the kingdom of King Rama of old) and they understand. And when he talks of conquering through love and *ahimsa* (non-violence) they are reminded of Buddha and Mahavira and they accept him.

But the conformity of the Mahatma's physical and mental equipment to the traditions and temperament of the Indian people is but one factor accounting for the former's success. If he had been born in another epoch in Indian history, he might not have been able to distinguish himself so well. For instance, what would he have done at the time of the Revolution of 1857 when the people had arms, were able to fight, and wanted a leader who could lead them in battle ? The success of the Mahatma has been due to the failure of constitutionalism on the one side and armed revolution on the other. Since the eighties of the last century, the best political brains among the Indian people were engaged in a constitutional fight, in which the qualities most essential were skill in debate and eloquence in speech. In such an environment it is unlikely that the Mahatma would have attained much eminence. With the dawn of the present century people began to lose faith in constitutional methods. New weapons like Swadeshi (revival in national industry) and Boycott appeared, and simultaneously the revolutionary movement was born. As the years rolled by, the revolutionary movement began to gain ground (especially in Upper India) and during the Great War there was an attempt at a revolution. The failure of this attempt at a time when Britain had her hands full and the tragic events of 1919 convinced the Indian people that it was no use trying to resort to the method of physical force. The superior equipment of Britain would easily smash any such attempt and in its wake there would come indescribable misery and humiliation.

In 1920 India stood at the cross-roads. Constitutionalism was dead ; armed revolution was sheer madness. But silent acquiescence was impossible. The country was groping for a new method and looking for a new leader. Then there sprang up India's man of destiny—Mahatma Gandhi—who had been bidding his time all these years and quietly preparing himself for the great task ahead of him. He knew himself—he knew his country's needs and he knew also that during the next phase of India's struggle, the crown of leadership would be on his head. No false sense of modesty troubled him—he spoke with a firm voice and the people obeyed.

The Indian National Congress of today is largely his creation. The Congress Constitution is his handwork. From a talking body he has converted the Congress into a living and fighting organisation. It has its ramification in every town and village in India, and the entire nation has been trained to listen to one voice. Nobility of character and capacity to suffer have been made the essential tests of leadership, and the Congress is today the largest and the most representative political organisation in the country.

But how could be achieve so much within this short period ? By his single-hearted devotion, his relentless will and his indefatigable labour. Moreover, the time was suspicious and his policy prudent. Though he appeared as a dynamic force, he was not too revolutionary for the majority of his countrymen. If he had been so, he would have frightened them, instead of inspiring them ; repelled them, instead of drawing them. His policy was one of unification. He wanted to unite the Hindu and Moslem ; the high caste and the low caste ; the capitalist and the labourer ; the landlord and the peasant. By his humanitarian outlook and his freedom from hatred, he was able to rouse sympathy even in his enemy's camp.

But Swaraj is still a distant dream. Instead of one, the people have wanted for fourteen long years. And they will have to wait many more. With such purity of character and with such an unprecedented following, why has the Mahatma failed to liberate India ?

He has failed because the strength of a leader depends not on the largeness—but on the character—of one's following. With a much smaller following, other leaders have been able to liberate their country—while the Mahatma with a much larger following has not. He has failed, because while he has understood the character of his own people—he has not understood the character of his opponents. The logic of the Mahatma is not the logic which appeals to John Bull. He has failed, because his policy of putting all his cards on the table will not do. We have to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's—and in a political fight, the art of diplomacy cannot be dispensed with. He has failed, because he has not made use of the international weapon. If we desire to win our freedom through non-violence, diplomacy and international propaganda are essential. He has failed, because the false unity of interests that are inherently opposed is not a source of strength but a source of weakness in political warfare. The future of India rests exclusively with those radical and militant forces that will be able to undergo the sacrifice and suffering necessary for winning freedom. Last but not least, the Mahatma has failed, because he had to play a dual role in one person—the role of the leader of an enslaved people and that of a world-teacher, who has a new doctrine to preach. It is this duality which has made him at once the irreconcilable foe of the Englishman, according to Mr. Winston Churchill, and the best policeman of the Englishman according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson.

What of the future ? What role will the Mahatma play in the days to come ? Will he be able to emancipate his dear country ? Several factors have to be considered. So far as his health and vitality are concerned, it is highly probable that he will be spared many years of active and useful public life and his determination to achieve something tangible in the direction of his country's freedom will keep up his spirits. So far as his popularity and reputation are concerned, they will endure till the end of his life—because unlike other political leaders, the Mahatma's popularity and reputation do not depend on his political leadership—but largely on his character. The question we have to consider, however, is whether

the Mahatma will continue his political activities or whether he will voluntarily withdraw himself from active polities—of which there are indications at the present moment—and devote himself exclusively to social and humanitarian work. A prediction in the case of the Mahatma is a hazardous proposition. Nevertheless, one thing is certain. The Mahatma will not play second fiddle to anyone. As long as it will be possible for him to guide the political movement, he will be there—but if the composition or the mentality of the Congress changes, he may possibly retire from active politics. That retirement may be temporary or permanent. A temporary retirement is like a strategic retreat and is not of much significance because the hero will come back into the picture once again. We have had experience of the Mahatma's retirement from active politics once before—from 1924 to 1928. Whether there is a possibility of the Mahatma's permanent retirement depends to some extent at least, on the attitude of the British Government. If he is able to achieve something tangible for his country, then his position will be unassailable among his countrymen. Nothing succeeds like success, and the Mahatma's success will confirm public faith in his personality and in his weapon ot non-violent non-co-operation. But if the British attitude continues to be as uncompromising as it is today, public faith in the Mahatma as a political leader and in the method of non-violent non-co-operation will be considerably shaken. In that event they will naturally turn to a mere radical leadership and policy.

In spite of the unparalleled popularity and reputation which the Mahatma has among his countrymen and will continue to have regardless of his future political career, there is no doubt that the unique position of the Mahatma is due to his political leadership. The Mahatma himself distinguishes between his mass-popularity and his political following and he is never content with having merely the former. Whether he will be able to retain that political following in the years to come in the event of the British attitude being as unbending as it is today, will depend on his ability to evolve a more radical policy. Will he be able to give up the attempt to unite all the elements in the country and boldly identify himself with the

more radical forces? In that case nobody can possibly supplant him. The hero of the present phase of the Indian struggle will then be the hero of the next phase as well. But what does the balance of probability indicate?

The Patna meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in May 1934, affords an interesting study in this connection. The Mahatma averted the Swarajist revolt by advocating council-entry himself. But the Swarajists of 1934, are not the dynamic Swarajists of 1922-23. Therefore, while he was able to win them over, he could not avoid alienating the Left Wingers, many of whom have now combined to form the Congress Socialist Party. This is the first time that a Socialist Party has been started openly within the Indian National Congress, and it is extremely probable that economic issues will henceforth be brought to the fore. With the clarification of economic issues, parties will be most scientifically organised within the Congress and also among the people in general.

The Congress Sociatists appear at the moment to be under the influence of Fabian Socialism and some of their ideas and shibboleths were the fashion several decades ago. Nevertheless, the Congress Socialists do represent a radical force within the Congress and in the country. Many of those who could have helped them actively are not available at present. When their assistance will be forthcoming, the Party will be able to make more headway.

At the present moment another challenge to the Mahatma's policy has crystallised within the Congress in the Congress Nationalist Party led by Pandit Malaviya. The dispute has arisen over the Communal Award of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. The issue is, however, a comparatively minor one, because the official Congress Party and the Congress Nationalist Party are agreed in the total rejection of the White Paper of which the Communal Award is an integral part. Only the official Congress Party is foolishly afraid of openly condemning the Communal Award. Since the Congress Nationalist Party does not represent a more radical force in

the country, the ultimate challenge to the Mahatma's leadership cannot come from that direction.

One definite prediction can be made at this stage—namely, that the future parties within the Congress will be based on economic issues. It is not improbable that in the event of the Left Wingers capturing the Congress machinery, there will be a further secession from the Right and the setting up of a new organisation of the Right Wingers like the Indian Liberal Federation of today. It will of course take some years to clarify the economic issues in the public mind—so that parties may be organised on the basis of a clear programme and ideology. Till the issues are clarified, Mahatma Gandhi's political supremacy will remain unchallenged, even if there is a temporary retirement as in 1924. But once the clarification takes place, his political following will be greatly affected. As has been already indicated, the Mahatma has endeavoured in the past to hold together all the warring elements—landlord and peasant, capitalist and labour, rich and poor. That has been the secret of his success, as surely as it will be the ultimate cause of his failure. If all the warring elements resolve to carry on the struggle for political freedom, the internal social struggle will be postponed for a long time and men holding the position of the Mahatma will continue to dominate the public life of the country, But that will not be the case. The vested interests, the 'haves', will in future fight shy of the 'have-nots' in the political fight and will gradually incline towards the British Government. The logic of history will, therefore, follow its inevitable course. The political struggle and the social struggle will have to be conducted simultaneously. The Party that will win political freedom for India will be also the Party that will win social and economic freedom for the masses. Mahatma Gandhi has rendered and will continue to render phenomenal service to his country. But India's salvation will not be achieved under his leadership.

INDIA'S GREATEST MAN*

I have read the statement of Mahatma Gandhi on the recent Presidential election with all the attention that it

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*Statement issued by Bose on February 5, 1939, following his re-election as Congress President.

deserves. It grieves me to find that Mahatma Gandhi has taken it as a personal defeat. I would respectfully differ from him on this point. The voters were not called upon to vote for or against Mahatma Gandhi. Consequently the result of the contest does not, in my view and in the view of most people, affect him personally.

Much has been said in the Press during the last few days about the Right and Left wings in the Congress. Several persons have interpreted the result of the election as a victory for the Leftists. The fact is that I placed before the public two main issues, namely, the fight against Federation and free and unfettered choice for the delegates in the matter of choosing their President. These issues must have greatly influenced the voting and, over and above these, the personality of the candidates might have had some effect. In the circumstances. I feel that while analysing the significance of the election we should not draw on our imagination nor should we read into it more than what it contains.

Assuming for argument's sake that the result of the election implies a victory of the Left, we should stop to consider what the Leftists' programme is. For the immediate future the Leftists stand for national unity and unrelenting opposition to the Federal scheme. In addition to this, they stand for democratic principles. Leftists will not take the responsibility of creating a split within the Congress. If a split does come, it will not be because of them, but in spite of them. Personally, I am definitely of opinion that there is neither reason nor justification for a split within the ranks of the Congress. I, therefore, earnestly hope that there will be no occasion now or in the near future for the so-called minority party to non-co-operate with the so-called majority party. I need hardly add that I shall try till the last to avert a split whenever any such likelihood appears before us.

A certain amount of apprehension has been caused in the minds of many as to the policy which people like myself will follow in future. Let me make it quite clear that there will be no violent break with the past in the parliamentary or in the

extra-parliamentary sphere. So far as the Parliamentary programme is concerned, we shall only try to implement our election pledges and our parliamentary programme with greater speed than in the past. In the extra-parliamentary sphere, we shall endeavour to rally all our strength and resources for combating Federation and for pushing on towards Purna Swaraj, and we shall, of course, act in accordance with the principles and the policy of the Indian National Congress.

In this connection, I should also like to say that I have on some occasions felt constrained to differ from Mahatma Gandhi on public questions, but I yield to none in my respect for his personality. If I have understood him correctly, he too would like to see people think for themselves even though they may not always agree with him. I do not know what sort of opinion Mahatmaji has of myself. But whatever his view may be, it will always be my aim and object to try and win his confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man.

6

RAJENDRA PRASAD

[Also popularly known as 'Rajen Babu', Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963) is rightly regarded as one of the great disciples of Mahatma Gandhi and a saintly figure in our country's politics. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, he "represented basic Indian traditions, and more especially of rural India." President Radhakrishnan described Rajen Babu as "one who embodies the spirit of gentleness, the gospel of India." A renowned scholar, a leading lawyer and, above all, a great humanist, Rajen Babu joined the freedom struggle in 1917 at the time of Gandhiji's satyagraha movement in Champaran. He took part in Gandhiji's non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements. In 1934 he presided over the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress. Like other Congress leaders, he criticised the Act of 1935 in very harsh terms. As a true champion of the cause of India's unity, he contradicted all arguments advanced in favour of country's partition. He invariably placed himself 'at the feet of the Mahatma'. The reason is that, as Prof. V.P. Varma observes, he "recognised Gandhi as a free and original thinker who addressed himself to all aspects of Indian life and gave a complete social philosophy." When Gandhiji suddenly stopped non-cooperation movement in 1922, he did not question the leadership of the 'Dictator' (Gandhiji) and preferred to remain in the camp of the 'no changers'. He expressed his strong views against Muslim communalism and, for this reason, found fault with the 14-Points of Jinnah given in 1929. He condemned the provisions of the Communal Award declared by the British Prime

Minister (Ramsay MacDonald) in 1932. Since he expressed his reservations for certain radical and progressive measures preferred by the leaders of leftist orientation, he was dubbed as a leading figure of the right-wing of the Congress. Such a stand was, however, rash in view of the fact that, as Gandhiji once said, the terms 'right' and 'left', as understood in European countries, had no relevance in the context of India's freedom struggle.]

ONE COUNTRY AND ONE HISTORY*

There is a great variety in climate and physical contours of the country in India which extends from the cold snow-clad mountains of the Himalayan Range in the North to a point almost near the equator in the South. We have also a large inland space which is altogether cut off from the sea, while we have a coast-line of some four thousand miles. We have the deserts of Rajputana and Sind and the evergreen plains of Bengal and Assam. We have an immense record of annual rainfall both in the north-eastern Province of Assam and in the south-western spurs of the Western Ghats ; and against this we have practically no regular rainfall worth the name in the deserts of Rajputana and Sind and some parts of the Ceded Districts of Andhra. We have also extremes of cold and heat at some places inland, particularly in the Punjab and N.-W.F.P. and no winter or summer properly so-called on the sea-coast in the southern portions of the Peninsula. As in so many other matters, this variety and difference in climatic and topographical conditions does not coincide with any division of the population on religious or communal lines. The cold and arid North-East and the wet, tempestuous and evergreen East and North-East differ from each other in every climatic and topographical respect, but they have both a very large Muslim population which enables a demand for division of India on communal basis to be made.

All this variety in climate and topography has had its effect on the development of the people inhabiting the different parts,

*From Rajendra Prasad : *India Divided*, Part I, Chapter 5, Sections V and VI. (Extracts)

on their dress and the kind of houses in which they live, on many of the social customs, and on their life generally. But in spite of these differences India is one whole country designed by nature to be separated from other adjoining countries by almost insurmountable natural barriers like high mountains and seas. Every invader, conqueror and Emperor of India, whether during the Hindu period or Musalman rule, has accordingly attempted with varying success to extend his empire to the whole of this country. It has been the ambition of every ruler to bring the whole of it under his suzerainty if not under his direct rule. There has been a certain region in the north-western corner which has always been a sort of no-man's land, changing its rulers, now being under an Indian ruler and now under an outsider or non-Indian. The British Government has only followed the age-old practice of the Hindu Chakravartis and Muslim Emperors in gaining suzerainty over the whole of this country. There have been kingdoms just as there are provinces now, which sometimes quarrelled with one another. But there is no evidence that any one living in or ruling one of those kingdoms regarded himself as anything but an Indian and his part of the country as anything but a part of India as distinguished from, say, China or Persia or Turkistan or Arabia or even perhaps Burma. On the other hand, every Hindu who performs his *sandhya* has to repeat a *sloka* in the *sankalpa* in which he pictures the country as a whole and imagines the waters of the Sindhu, the Ganga, and the Cauvery to be mingled together in the water of his small water pot. And this has gone on not only during the period of Hindu rule when occasionally a Chakravarti claimed suzerainty over the whole country but also during the period when there were different kings ruling in different parts of the country, when Muslim Emperors ruled at Delhi and when small Muslim kingdoms were established in different parts of the country. It is repeated even today when British suzerainty spreads over the whole Peninsula. There are four places of pilgrimage which are known as the four *Dhams*, a visit to which is said to earn the greatest virtue for a Hindu. They are: Rameshwaram in the southern tip of the Peninsula, Badrikashrama deep in the Himalayas at a height of some 15,000

feet, Jagannath Puri on the east coast in Orissa, and Dwarka on the western sea-coast in Kathiawar. It cannot be denied that irrespective of who ruled and what were the administrative or political divisions of the country, the Hindus have never conceived of India as comprising anything less than what we regard as India today. The Muslim and British rulers have simply accepted the Hindu traditional delimitation of the country.

On the other hand, until the two nations theory was proclaimed the other day, the Musalmans also never treated or thought of any part of present-day India as anything but a part and parcel of India. No Muslim conqueror of India ever thought of annexing any part of India to the foreign country from which he came. Whoever was able settled down in India and tried to bring the portions of India which did not accept his suzerainty under his sway. The fact that on the border there was a fringe which fell on the one or the other side of the natural boundary line does not in any way affect the validity and correctness of the above statement.

Not only as rulers but even during the period of British Rule Musalmans of British India no less than those of the Indian States never until the other day treated or claimed any part of the soil of India as anything but a part of India. I do not know if even the Muslim League claims that the north-western and eastern zones which it desires to have constituted into independent States are outside India or as being anything but parts of India. So far as I am aware, Mr. C. Rahmat Ali, who is the Founder President of the Pakistan National Movement, is the only person who has openly proclaimed that 'to accept the territorial unity of "India" is to fasten the tyrannical yoke of "Indianism" on the "Millat",' and has called upon his co-religionists 'to live to sever all ties with "India" and to save the "Millat" from "Indianism" and to serve "Pax-Islamica".'[1] He falls foul of the All-India Muslim League for

1. 'The Millat of Islam and the Menace of "Indianism" '—being a letter addressed by C. Rahmat Ali to the Supreme Council of the Pakistan National Movement, p. 7.

its name—'for its very name bears the stamp of "Indianism" and so belies our struggle against "Indianism". It breeds the spirit of "Indianism" and thus betrays our Millat to "Indianism". Let us not minimise the effect and importance of names. They are the distinguishing marks ; and, as such, establish the identities of their bearers. More than that, they are the moral symbols ; and as symbols, the sources of inspiration.... The mistake has certainly cost us dear. It has compromised our nationality, labelled us as "Indian". I say this, not because there is anything wrong with the word "Indian" which, in itself, is as respectable as any other name ; but because we are not "Indian", and therefore, for us to style ourselves or our institutions as "Indian", is nothing but on act of renegation.'[2] Mr. Rahmat Ali after the realization of this fact gave the 'five north-western strongholds' of Islam the name of Pakistan in 1933, and in 1937 to Bengal-Assam the name of Bang-i-Islam and to Hyderabad-Deccan the name of Usmanistan, the three regions which he regards as the three *Milli* strongholds arbitrarily included in the binational sub-continent of 'India'.[3] So it is only since 1933 that India has begun to be treated as a sub-continent comprising different countries by Mr. Rahmat Ali and the Pakistan National Movement. I do not know if there is any other organization or individual of note who has followed his lead in this respect up to now. Divisions for administrative purposes may be made but I do not know if countries have been or can be created by men in this way. Whenever an attempt has been made in Europe to cut up a country the result has been a legacy of hate and bitterness resulting in sanguinary wars, including the global one that has just been devastating the world. That ought to furnish us a lesson and serve us as a warning.

The invasions of India by Muslims started with the landing of Mohammad Bin Kasim on the shores of Sind in the ninth century A.D. and went on till the eighteenth century when Ahmad Shah Abdali made his last assault. It is doubtful if any one of these invasions extending over about eight or nine

2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. Ibid., pp. 1 and 16.

hundred years was a purely religious invasion undertaken by religious fanatics or enthusiasts for spreading Islam. Like all conquests they were actuated by temporal and material motives rather than by religious zeal. The earliest ones were naturally resisted by the Hindus who alone then inhabited the country, and took the shape of conflicts between the Hindus and Musalmans. But from early times the ambition of these invaders was to settle down in India, and from the time of Shahabuddin Ghori in the eleventh century downwards Musalman invaders whether they were Pathans, Tartars, Turks, Mughals or Afghans who came from outside India assumed suzerainty over parts of India and in course of time extended the area of their suzerainty. As their kingdom extended it became difficult, if not impossible, to rule the whole of it from Delhi, their capital seat, and they had to appoint governors in the more distant parts. These governors were not slow to take advantage of any weakening of the Centre and to establish themselves as independent kings in the provinces to which they had been posted. We thus have two kinds of war in the long history of Muslim rule in India. There were wars by the Muslim kings to extend their kingdom, and in the earlier period they were naturally against Hindus who still ruled in the parts sought to be conquered and annexed to Delhi. But it was not long before independent Muslim kingdoms had grown up and many of the wars which the Muslim Emperors of Delhi had to wage and many of the expeditions which they had to lead were not against Hindu kings but against Muslim kings who had established themselves, or against their own governors who had revolted. In these wars and expeditions Hindus fought on both sides. All the Muslim invaders who came from the North-West after the Ghoris had to and in fact did invade a Muslim kingdom in India and had to and did fight and defeat a Muslim ruler who had established himself on the throne at Delhi. The invasions of Timur and Nadir Shah were not against Hindu kings but against Muslim kings of Delhi and were resisted by them. Babar had to fight and defeat not a Hindu king of Delhi but Ibrahim Lodi, a Muslim king, at the battle of Panipat, before he could establish the Mughal Empire. When Babar fought Rana Sanga of Mewar the latter was assisted not only

by Rajputs but also by Hassan Khan of Mewat and Sultan Mahomud Lodi, a son of Sikandar Lodi, who had been acknowledged king of Delhi by Sanga and it was after defeating this combined force of Rajputs and Musalmans at the battle of Kanwah in 1527 that his empire became established. Humayun, the son of Babar, lost the Empire for a time to Sher Shah, a Muslim Pathan, and when it was recovered after Sher Shah's death, Akbar after him had to fight Muslim rulers for strengthening the foundations of that Empire. Much of the time and energy of the Mughal Emperors from Akbar right down to Aurangzeb was taken up in suppressing the revolts of Muslim Governors of Provinces or in conquering independent Muslim kingdoms. It is well known how Aurangzeb spent many years in the South conquering the Kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkonda and that he died there. Many of these expeditions and wars were led on behalf of the Emperors at Delhi by Hindu generals like Man Singh and Bhagwandas in the time of Akbar and by Jaswant Singh and Jay Singh in the time of Aurangzeb, conquering and suppressing not only Muslim rulers and governors but also Hindus who were ruling at the time in parts of the country. It is thus clear that the wars and expeditions of India and in India during the long period of Muslim rule were actuated by the same temporal and mundane motives which have actuated all wars and conquests at all times, *viz.* personal ambition, dynastic rivalries and a desire to extend and consolidate an Empire, and acquire the honour and glory which conquest and empire are supposed to confer.

The history of India for 600 years beginning with the thirteenth century when Qutbuddin Aibak established the Sultanate in 1206 down to the end of the eighteenth century when the British power had succeeded in firmly establishing itself is therefore not a history of continuous conflicts and wars between Hindus on the one side and Muslims on the other. This is not the place nor is there space here to show that during this long period there were more conflicts between Muslims and Muslims in India than between Muslims and Hindus.

I have strayed into this rather long historical discussion not to show that the Muslim rulers of India did nothing more than fight amongst themselves. They in fact did a great deal more. They consolidated an Empire which reached the height of glory. They encouraged arts and were instrumental in the long run in evolving what may be called a national State of India—as States were in those days. I have mentioned these instances only to show that Muslims fought Muslims more than they fought Hindus and that it is a wrong and one-sided view of history to imagine, as has been done by some persons, that during the long period of over six hundred years they were constantly engaged in wars against the Hindus whom they were oppressing all the time, leaving a legacy of hate and bitterness, the effects of which have not been and cannot be obliterated or forgotten.

In more recent times Indian soldiers in the British army have been sent out of the country to fight wars for the British Empire in China, in Malaya, in Burma on the East, and in Arabia, in Persia, in Afghanistan, in Egypt, in Turky, in Cyrenaica, in Tripoli and even in Europe on the West. Musalman soldiers have fought and helped in the destruction of the Empire of Turkey. The fact that some of the powers and countries against which they fought were also Musalman has not stood in their way. There is nothing surprising in all this. The history of Islam outside India is replete with instances in which Muslims have fought Muslims, and one Muslim country or king has fought, defeated and conquered another Muslim country or king.

The Prophet had enjoined Muslims not to kill Muslims, and on some occasions in his lifetime when a person, even in the course of a battle declared himself to be a Muslim, and the question was raised whether such a person who professed to be a Musalman but about whose honesty of profession doubts were entertained should be killed or spared in battle, he directed that once the man declared himself converted, he should not be killed and his life should be spared. But soon after his passing away the injunction appears to have been forgotten

even by those who had the privilege of direct association with the Prophet himself or with those who had had such association with him. Hazrat Usman, who was not only the third Caliph but very closely related to the Prophet, having married two of his daughters, was killed by Musalmans who had rebelled against him. The fourth Caliph Hazrat Ali, who was a cousin as also another son-in-law of the Prophet, had to fight a battle with Hazrat Ayesha, a widow of the Prophet, and also shared the fate of Hazrat Usman—was murdered by Musalmans. The sons of Hazrat Ali were also killed by Musalmans who supported the claim of the Omayyad Yezid to the Caliphate. If such was the case within a few years of the Prophet's death and with those who had been amongst the earliest of Muslims—Hazrat Ali was the first youth to accept Islam at the hands of the Prophet himself--and his lifelong associates, it is easy to understand that the later Muslims could also fight other Muslims.

In the later wars between Muslims, certainly, if not even in these early ones, Islam as a religion or its propagation and protection played no more part than it did in the numerous wars and expeditions against or in India. After conquest and consolidation of his power every conqueror, king, or emperor carried on the administration as he considered best and safest in the circumstances of the country and the people among whom his lot was cast. Islam undoubtedly influenced the administration and the lives of the people—both the rulers and the ruled. But that is something very different from saying that the propagation or protection of Islam was the object of any of these temporal rulers either in India or outside In India, particularly Musalman rulers, and indeed all Muslims generally, formed what may be described as small islands which had grown and were constantly growing in size and extent by accretion. The number of foreigners who came as invaders or conquerors and settled down in India was indeed small compared with that of non-Muslims. The present-day Muslim population is composed very largely—in fact overwhelmingly—of Indians who adopted Islam as their religion and the descendants of such converted persons who must have been Hindus.

When we find so much of confidence, fellow feeling and joint action in matters military, it is only reasonable to axpect that there would be even more of it in civil administration and in the ordinary life of the people at large, and this expectation is well founded in facts furnished by history.

'The employment of the Hindus was a necessity of their rule. Mahmud of Ghazni had a numerous body of Hindu troops who fought for him in Central Asia and his Hindu Commander Tilak suppressed the rebellion of his Muslim general Niyaltgin. When Qutub-uddin Aibak decided to stay in Hindustan, he had no other choice but to retain the Hindu staff which was familiar with the civil administration, for without it all government including the collection of revenue would have fallen into utter chaos. The Muslims did not bring with them from beyond the Indian frontiers artisans, accountants and clerks. Their buildings were erected by Hindus who adapted their ancient rulers to newer conditions, their coins were struck by Hindu goldsmiths, and their accounts were kept by Hindu officers. Brahmin legalists advised the king on the administration of Hindu law and Brahmin astronomers helped in the performances of their general functions.'[4] 'One noteworthy fact of the reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah I (A.D. 1534-1557) was that public accounts began to be kept in Hindi instead of in Persian and many Brahmins were appointed in charge of the accounts so that they soon acquired a great influence in the government. In the reign of Yusuf Adil Shah the Hindus had also been admitted to the exercise of considerable powers in his revenue department[5].

Sultan Muhammad Tughlak 'had many Hindus in his employ. One of the highest officers of his Finance Department was a Hindu by name Ratan. Akbar's celebrated Finance and Revenue Minister, Raja Todar Mal, introduced far-reaching changes in administration and was reckoned among the highest

4. Tarachand : *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, pp. 136-37.

5. N.N. Law : "Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammedan Rule", p. 93.

dignitaries of the State. Aurangzeb's Finance Minister, Ragh Nath, was also a Hindu.'[6]

Even today in Indian States Hindus and Muslamans are appointed to the highest posts irrespective of their religion It is enough to cite the instances of Maharaja Sir Kishen Prasad of Hyderabad and Mirza Sir Mohammad Ismail of Mysore and now of Jaipur.

The Revolt of 1857 against the British was a joint enterprise of Hindus and Muslims who had both rallied round Bahadur Shah, the titular Emperor of Delhi. Had it succeeded, it would have re-established and consolidated the Empire of Bahadur Shah, as surely as its failure resulted in his imprisonment and exile and the destruction of the great house of the Mughals as Emperors of India.

During the years immediately following the Revolt of 1857 Muslims came in for a great deal of repression at the hands of the British Government. The Ulema particularly never wholeheartedly submitted to the rule of the British. With their long historical background, the reaction of the Musalmans against outside interference of the British was great. Such 'pressure from without is probably the largest single factor in the process of national evolution' in the words of Julian Huxley quoted above ; and no wonder all these have combined in forging an Indian nation. Musalmans no less than Hindus were emphatic in asserting the existence of this Indian Nation, albeit with distinct religions of which two were the most important as being followed by the largest numbers of the population. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who is credited with having kept large bodies of Musalmans from joining the Congress, held this belief in his earlier days. He regarded the Hindus and Muslims as the two eyes of a maiden, and you could not injure one without injuring the other. It is unnecessary to cite quotations from the speeches and writings of Musalmans who have been associated with the Indian National Congress.

6. Mehta and Patwardhan, The Communal Triangle, p. 19. 48. Julian Huxley : "Race in Europe", p. 3.

I shall close this discussion of the two nations theory with some quotations from distinguished Musalmans of India. First and foremost I shall give two passages from the speeches of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and end with citations from two living distinguished Muslims of our day. In a speech delivered at a gathering at Gurdaspur in 1885 Sir Syed spoke as follows :

'From the oldest times the word Nation is applied to the inhabitants of one country, though they differ in some peculiarities which are characteristic of their own. Hindu and Muhammadan brethren, do you people any country other than Hindustan ? Do you not inhabit the same land ? Are you not burnt and buried in the same soil ? Do you not tread the same ground, and live upon the same soil ? Remember that the words "Hindu" and "Muhammadan" are only meant for religious distinction, otherwise all persons, whether Hindu, Muhammadan, or Christian, who reside in this country belong to one and the same nation. Then all these different sects can only be described as one nation ; they must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all.'

On another occasion he spoke about the same thing at Lahore :

'In the word Nation I include both Hindus and Muhammadans because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it. With me it is not so much worth considering what is their religious faith, because we do not see anything of it. What we do see is that we inhabit the same land, are subject to the rule of the same government, the fountains of benefits for all are the same and the pangs of famine also we suffer equally. These are the different grounds upon which I call both these races which inhabit India by one word, *i.e.* Hindu, meaning to say that they are inhabitants of Hindusthan. While in the Legislative Council, I was always anxious for the prosperity of this nation.' (*Indian Nation Builders—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan*, pp. 41-2)[7].

In his Foreword to Sj. Atulananda Chakravarti's *Hindus and Musalmans of India* Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, no mean

7. Quoted in "Pakistan Examined", by Rezaul Karim, p. 117.

historian, after a bird's eye view of social and cultural development of India during the ages, has come to the following conclusion :

'In almost every sphere of our national activity, there was greater solidarity and rapport between the two communities than is generally supposed. The history of Indian culture shows continuous reciprocity of feeling and solidarity of sentiment between the masses no less than the classes of the two communities and the classics of Indian languages give us a more complete embodiment of the national spirit than can be shown by any other nation in Asia. This understanding which purified the tastes and instincts of the aristocracy and the populace, has penetrated and refined the whole nation. Whatever our political differences may be—and I shall be the last to minimise them—the fact remains that in the temper of their intellect, their traditions of life, their habits, and the circle of their thought, there is a powerful tradition of unity, which has been forged in the fires and chills of nearly a thousand years of a chequered period, and is indestructible and immortal.[8] What is needed, to quote Sir Shafaat once again, is that 'the myopia which sees social phenomenon as merely political phenomenon, and regards the ailments of a national body as political disorder must be corrected by the intensive study of Hindu-Muslim culture and a deeper understanding of the forces which have moulded Indian thought and aspirations in our splendid past'.[9]

Sir Sultan Ahmad is no less emphatic in his opinion : 'The Hindu-Muslim differences of today threaten to undo the historic fellowship between the two communities that, beginning under the Moghuls, has existed for centuries. It is seldom realized that two disunite Hindustan would be to work against the one constructive factor of the history of Muslim rule in this country. The Indians of today certainly possess far more knowledge than their ancestors, but the picture of their ideas

8. Atulananda Chakravarti ; "Hindus and Musalmans of India,", pp. xix-xx.

9. Ibid., p. xvi.

is dwarfed by the large canvas on which is imprinted the Aryan-Saracenic conception of unity. Indian leaders and thinkers of a remoter age sought to establish harmony between the two religions. Prince Dara Shekoh compared them to two confluent rivers, *Majma-ul-Bahrein* ; Kabir and Nanak tried to fuse them together and imported into their prayers the names of both "Allah the Bountiful and Ram". The Hindu and Muslim masters were inspired to bring into existence common arts and crafts that touched the souls and satisfied the utilitarian needs of both Hindus and Muslims. Common notions of joy and beauty were evolved. The Indian of today in out to destroy the edifice built for him by the hand of history. Unable to appreciate that history, he gives it a bad name.

'It is strange that Hindu-Muslim unity should be going to pieces in spite of the existence of so many common points between the Hindus and Muslims. It should have been our duty to use these points for broadening the basis of unity. A common cultural heritage in music and literature, painting and architecture, was not the only treasure bequeathed to us ; a common political destiny too was evolved as the Hindu and the Muslim fought together in many a battle. In social life, again, the traditions and practices of the two communities were interwoven one with the other. Common ways of life were already in evidence even as early as the days of the Emperor Babar, who facetiously described them as the days "Hindustani ways", in which both Hindu and Muslim traits were found freely mixed up. Then came the Urdu language, beginning as the language of the camp. Even in religion, in those days the most cherished of all things, the two influenced each other. The Muslim gave a new turn and a new tinge to the religion of the mass of Hindus ; his own in turn took on an Indian complexion. This change was noted by his ultramontane co-religionists.

'The Muslim in India became the son of the soil. This course was irrevocably decided for him when Qutubuddin separated the Sultanate of Delhi from the Ghaznivite Empire. That a Muslim king should not discriminate against any section of his subjects was an injunction, clear and definite, for

he was enjoined to "regard all sects of religion with the single eye of favour, and not bemother some and bestep-mother others". It is interesting to trace the growth of the love for India as the mother country as we compare Babar's Memoirs and Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*. The founder of the Empire complains—"Hindustan is a country that has few pleasures to recommended it." But gone was this newcomer's attitude by the time that Akbar came to the throne, whose historian is carried away by the "beauties of Hindustan" and apologises for a digression which proceeded from "the love of my native country".[10]

THE ROWLATT ACT*

Government officials generally had praise for India's war effort, but they were not content with the voluntary help of the people. They tried methods of extortion which left a lot of discontent in their trail. The Punjab, especially, was deeply hurt and seething with discontent. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then Governor of the province, used unmitigated force to enlist recruits and obtain funds for the war and the people of the Punjab were naturally bitter. The British Government knew this and knew also that similar discontent existed in other provinces, but they did not seem to care so long as they got what they wanted. Some Indians living abroad, for example, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Veer Savarkar and others, thought of turning the war to India's advantage and tried to work for an armed revolt in the country. But that proved to be a still-born effort.

Meanwhile, the Muslims of India felt aggrieved that Indian soldiers, including Muslims, had been sent to fight Turkey which was an ally of Germany. The Government tried to pacify them with the promise that they would protect the religious institutions and places of worship in Turkey and not do anything which would harm Turkish unity or the Turkish nation.

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10. A Treaty between India and the United Kingdom, pp. 60-I.

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography* Chapter 23.

Notwithstanding the promises made to the Muslims and to the people of India in general, the British policy continued unchanged. The Defence of India Act, a war-time measure, could remain in force only till six months after termination of the war. If the security regulations had, therefore, to be annulled, Government would have to release all the internees detained without proper trial. In case popular discontent assumed larger proportions the Government would have no weapon to bring it effectively and quickly under control. It was not a time, the Government thought, to observe the niceties of law in political trials. It, therefore, appointed a committee presided over by Sir Sidney Rowlatt, a Judge of the London High Court, to go into the question. The Committee, after giving a history of the Indian revolutionary movement, recommended the enactment of a Bill to give summary powers to suppress all disturbances and revolutionary activities and to maintain 'law and order' in India. In short, the Rowlatt Report wanted the Government of India to continue to enjoy the same emergency powers given to them during the war even during peace time. We had, thus, on the one hand, the offer of reforms by the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme and, on the other, the Rowlatt Report proposing to arm the Government with extraordinary powers during peace time. The meaning of this dual and contradictory policy was not lost on the people.

Whatever the object of the Rowlatt Bill, the provisions were so drastic that the people in general felt that their freedom was in danger. To Gandhiji, this came as a rude shock. His faith in the British was shaken. The unconditional support to the British cause in the war was now to be rewarded with repression. He made an appeal to the Viceory to drop the Bill, but the request was rejected. Then Gandhiji announced the launching of the first nation-wide satyagraha campaign. The agitation was to take the form of meetings, hartals and peaceful demonstrations. He fixed a day to start the satyagraha and asked the people to fast, pray, take out processions and hold meetings to protest against the Black Act. He issued these calls to the people through the columns of *Young India*, a

weekly magazine he had started some time previously and whose articles had created a stir in the whole country.

The response to Gandhiji's call was phenomenal. His message, strangely enough, reached the four corners of the country even though the Congress organisation had not become so strong and widespread. On the appointed day, all work came to a standstill and the country observed an unprecedented hartal. In all towns, all means of communications were suspended. Even in the countryside, the peasant put away his plough.

But before the hartal Gandhiji had made one stipulation. He wanted every satyagrahi to sign a pledge of non-violence and to agree to defy such laws as might be suggested by the Satyagraha Committee and to suffer gladly any punishment such action might entail. The Committee had so far not specified the laws to be defied. The Liberals and a section of the press criticised his move but Gandhiji stuck to his resolve. In Bihar, Hasan Imam, I and others signed the pledge. I actively organised the hartal in Patna.

Now and then I would get letters from Gandhiji but mostly we drew on *Young India*. Mazharul Haq had gone to Delhi to attend the meetings of the Council, but Hasan Imam was there and took an active part in the movement. On the first day all the shopkeepers we had approached had readily agreed to close their shops. Only one big businessman refused to oblige. Hasan Imam and I went to his shop and there Hasan Imam took off his cap and placed it on the feet of the businessman. The businessman winced and said : "What is this you have done ? You could have ordered me to close and I would have done it." The hartal was then complete. The procession we took out was something the like of which had never before been seen in Patna. It extended from Gulzarbagh to the city fort where it was to culminate in a meeting. But as the accommodation was not enough there, we held the meeting on the banks of the Ganga. It passed off peacefully though we had our misgivings that it might get out of hand and clash with the police.

The 6th April Delhi demonstration was a momentous one and unprecedented scenes of Hindu-Muslim unity were witnessed there. People of both the communities jointly faced the bullets. The leader of the mammoth procession, Swami Shraddhanand came forward and offered himself as a target for the bullets. The Muslims were so touched by this gesture of patriotic self-sacrifice that they, in their enthusiasm, carried the Swami aloft to Jumma Masjid and asked him to speak from there.

Gandhiji left for Delhi, but on the way he was arrested. At Palwal, he was made to detrain and taken to an unknown place. Mahadev Desai, who accompanied him, returned to Bombay. It was he who sent me a telegram informing me of the turn of events and asking me to meet him in Bombay. I left immediately.

Gandhiji had been taken to Bombay and was there released. Then, accompanied by Mahadev Desai, he returned to Ahmedabad, learning of disturbances there. I also rushed to Ahmedabad. When I reached there the next morning. I found the railway station under the control of British troops, I learnt that martial law had been declared in the city. I reached Sabarmati with difficulty and there quiet had been restored as a result of Gandhiji visit. Within a few hours of my arrival at Sabarmati, martial law was lifted. After restoring peace there, Gandhiji lett for Bombay the next day, taking me with him.

Meanwhile, grave reports of widespread disturbances and violent Government repression reached us. At Amritsar, in Jallianwalla Bagh, General Dyer had opened fire on a meeting of unarmed persons, killing a large number of them. Gandhiji was agitated and in the train took to decision to suspend the satyagraha. He felt that in view of the circumstances, it would be improper to continue the satyagraha. He drafted a statement saying that because of the unpreparedness of the people to stick to non-violence, he was compelled to postpone the campaign. The statement was released to the press when we arrived in Bombay.

After a few days in Bombay, I left for Patna where I once again took up my legal practice. Despite the break of eight to ten months during the Champaran struggle, my constant visits to Gandhiji and other preoccupations, my practice was not affected and I continued to have a good clientele and a handsome income.

The first lesson I learnt at Gandhiji's feet at Champaran had brought about such a change in my attitude that even those whom I had had to oppose in principle reposed faith in my word. I feel proud of the fact that, while I practised, the judges trusted me fully. An English judge used to go to the extent of asking me, when the advocacy of my opponent was not adequate, to cite the worst precedent I could think of against my own brief and I never hesitated to do so. But after quoting such an unfavourable precedent, I would adduce another to rebut it. I never put forth a weak argument. I never accepted a case which could not be argued properly. I preferred to tell such a client frankly that there was nothing to be gained by filing his suit. I had found that when a client rejected my advice and approached another lawyer and filed the suit, he almost invariably lost it.

NON-CO-OPERATION AND KHILAFAT*

The Satyagraha campaign had been withdrawn but discontent among the people went on mounting. The happenings in the Punjab contributed not a little to the anger of the people. That province was subjected to all sorts of excesses under the cloak of martial law. People were humiliated and hundreds were sent behind prison bars for long periods. The outside world then knew little of how the courageous Punjabis bore all the tryannies, for the province was completely cut off from the rest of the country. None was allowed to get out of the province nor was anyone permitted to enter it. Even letters and telegrams could not be sent or received. Nevertheless, some news trickled out and a wave of anger swept the country. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims participated in all agitations

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Antobiography*, Chapter 24.

jointly. A remarkable and inspiring feature of the Punjab struggle was the new sense of unity among the people. Together they braved lathi blows, bullets, aerial bombardments, crawled on the ground side by side and drink water from the same pitchers.

The Congress was to hold its next annual session in Amritsar (1920) which was the scene of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The Punjab had been terrorised to such an extent that it was feared it might not be possible to make arrangements for the session. But since the holding of the session in that province had a great significance, it was decided to go ahead with it. Motilal Nehru was elected President. I could not attend the session as I was preoccupied with Hariji's case at Arrah, and he would not allow me to go. The Congress session was to be held in the last week of December 1919 and the case was to open on the second of January 1920. Motilal Nehru was also engeged in that case but he could take it up only some days after it had opened. Meanwhile Sir N.N. Sircar prepared the ground and conducted the case with the assistance of other barristers and lawyers.

Soon after the withdrawal of martial law the 'Government appointed an inquiry committee to go into the incidents in the Punjab, Lord Hunter, an English Judge, was the chairman. The Congress decided to place before the committee evidence at its disposal about the atrocities. When, however, the hearing was in progrers difference of opinion arose and the Congress withdrew from the inquiry. It set up a parallel inquiry committee with the same terms of reference as the Hunter Committee. As the proceedings of the Hunter Committee were published in the newspapers, the people for the first time came to know of the magnitude of the atrocities in the Punjab. Gandhiji, Deshbandhu Das, Jayakar, Abbas Tyabji and others visited the ravaged districts of the Punjab and submitted their findings to the Congress Inquiry Committee which published its report in 1920, at the same time as the Hunter Committee.

Britain's attitude towards Turkey had created a ferment among Indian Muslims. She did not honour the promise she

had given to the Muslim during the war. Turkey was being dismembered and her headship (Khilafat) of the Muslim world was endangered. Muslim leaders like Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Azad, who had been under detention during the war, were released about the time of the Amritsar Congress. They established Khilafat Committees all over India and started a country-wide agitation. As the Punjab atrocities had alienated the other sections of the people also, support to the Khilafat movement was spontaneous. Many Hindus became members of the Khilafat Committees, giving monetary help, and, as a reciprocal gesture, Muslims joined the Congress in considerable numbers.

Mahatmaji became intimate with the Ali brothers and he used to participate in the meetings of the Khilafat Committee. It was at a meeting of the Khilafat Committee held in Allahabad in April 1920 that he placed before the public for the first time his programme of non-violent civil disobedience. The Committee agreed to act upon his suggestion. The Maulanas supported the programme with religious fervour and declared that any co-operation with the Government would be a sacrilege.

Shaukat Ali visited Patna in April 1920, when a big public meeting was held. The Maulana explained the programme of the non-co-operation movement and asked the people how far they were prepared to implement it. I happened to be in Patna and was there at the meeting. I was asked to speak. I got up and unhesitatingly declared my readiness to join the movement. Though Gandhiji had made his proposal, the Congress had not yet taken a final decision nor had it chalked out its programme, but this did not prevent me from announcing my decision to join the movement if it was launched. I did realise that it would mean giving up my practice at the Bar and abandoning the idea of seeking a seat in the Bihar Legislative Council in the first elections to be held under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. In fact, I had already toured Champaran which I wanted to represent and at one place Mazharul Haq had addressed a meeting supporting my candidature. Now the die was cast and I had to turn my back on all such ideas.

When the reports of the Hunter and Congress Inquiry Committees were released, a meeting of the A.I.C.C. was called at Banaras to consider them. I attended the meeting and it was decided to call a special session of the Congress at Calcutta to consider the future course of action. Lajpat Rai, who had returned from abroad after several years' absence, was elected President of the session. Civil disobedience was the talk of the whole country and Gandhiji was busy writing in his *Young India* and other papers explaining the programme and touring the country. At this juncture, the Congress suffered a great loss—Lokamanya Tilak passed away on August 1, 1920.

The special session of the Congress was to be held in September and in the meantime we convened a meeting of the Bihar Provincial Political Conference at Bhagalpur in August. I was asked to preside. I was hesitant to accept as I was a confirmed supporter of the non-co-operation movement and I was doubtful whether the people would accept the programme and whether, even if they accepted it, many would actually join the movement, I, therefore, sought the advice of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha and asked him if I would be precipitating a crisis by my plain speaking. He replied that I was free to state my views and the Conference was free to accept or reject them. He asked me to accept the presidentship and express my views in a forthright manner.

I started writing my presidential speech in Hindi, which was not the vogue at conferences then. The pressure of professional work, coupled with political activities, was too much for me and I fell ill. I was afraid I would not be able to attend the Bhagalpur session at all. However, my health improved and I was able to reach the place in time. The problems confronting the conference were so momentous and complex as to cause misgivings even in the minds of experienced persons. My feelings therefore could well be imagined. I was convinced about the necessity for non-co-operation, but many of the old leaders of the province were against it. Although public meetings had been attracting large crowds during the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation, it was a moot point how many would actually come forward to join the new movement. Many of the

senior leaders were not to attend the conference, in which case the responsibility of implementing the conference's decision in favour of non-co-operation would fall entirely on the younger generation. Considerations like these unnerved me.

On the eve of the Bhagalpur conference, we received a telegram from Gandhiji asking us to support the non-co-operation programme. At the conference I made a bold appeal in my presidential address for the acceptance of the programme. Braj Kishore Prasad, Dharni Dhar and others also advocated the cause forcefully. A large number of Muslims like Mazharul Haq, Shah Mohammed Zuber, Mohammed Shafi, Nurul Hasan and others also supported us. But prominent Muslim leaders like Hasan Imam, Sarfaraz Hussein Khan and others were ranged against us. On one side was experience and public service and on the other were enthusiasm, discontent born of an unbearable situation in the country and keenness to plunge into the struggle.

The conference endorsed my views and adopted a resolution supporting the principle of non-co-operation and set up a committee to formulate a programme having in view the situation in Bihar. Braj Kishore Prasad, the foremost leader present at the conference, argued eloquently in favour of adding the demand of Swaraj to the demands for justice in the Punjab and for restoring the Khilafat of the Muslim world. Till then in meetings and newspapers, the Punjab massacre and the Khilafat were stated to be the only causes of the projected non co operation. Braj Kishore Prasad wanted to impart stability to the movement which was to continue till the attainment of independence. This suggestion too was accepted.

A few days earlier, the Gujarat Provincial Political Conference had also passed a resolution on similar lines. As far a I remember, Bihar and Gujarat were the only two provinces to adopt such a stand before the special Calcutta session of the Congress.

I could not attend the Calcutta session unlike C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru who were also engaged in the Burma case.

My presence was necessary at Arrah. The session itself was a great success and it endorsed the non-co-operation resolution by a lage majority. To the demands relating to the Khilafat and the Punjab, it added the demand of Swaraj. To Gandhiji this made no difference in objective as he had all along been of the view that if the Government accepted our demands on Khilafat and the Punjab massacre, it would be tantamount to their acceptance of our desire for Swaraj also.

A few days after the Calcutta Congress, the A.I.C.C. met in Bombay to consider ways and means of implementing the non-co-operation resolution. I had now to consider seriously the question of giving up my practice. Hariji's case in Arrah was nearly at an end. I was soon relieved. But it was obvious that there would be appeals to the High Court and the Privy Council, and Hariji wanted me to be at his disposal for at least that case. Having worked on the case for a long time, I was not able to turn down his request. But I decided not to accept fresh briefs. Though, owing to my preoccupation at Arrah, I had not been working at the High Court for nearly a year, I still had a few cases pending at Patna. Against some of these briefs I had accepted money. I had not made up my mind about such cases.

I had not consulted my brother about my decision although he must have had an inkling of it. Though he had hoped that I would earn well and improve the family finances which were in an unenviable state, he did not utter a word of opposition. Many other lawyers gave up practice along with me, but people consoled themselves with the thought that the movement would end in a year and we would return to our work. But I had no such illusions because Swaraj was an aim of the movement and I saw no prospect of an early realisation of our demand.

After my return from Bombay I convened a meeting at my house of all those friends who had supported the programme. We discussed our future and the question of giving up our practice. Mv decision not to abandon the clients to whom I was already committed was construed by some as an excuse

for continuing my practice. In my own mind I was clear. I was representing a general case. As a matter of fact I had been almost absent from the Patna High Court for a year. The old cases had ended. I had not accepted any new briefs during this period. The cases in my hand were therefore much less than what they used to be. Still, because I had usually a very large number of cases, those left were quite many. I stuck to my point and explained that in the cases for which I had already taken remuneration and which were in progress, it was not fair to the clients to leave the work incomplete and I said that this was applicable to other lawyers too. Ultimately my proposal was accepted. But, actually, I did not have to appear in the High Court in any other case except Hariji's. I returned the remuneration taken or entrusted the case to a friend or in some cases the clients left me.

The other matter that we discussed was the boycott of Government and Government-aided schools and colleges. I gave a warning that success might not be ours in this direction. I had had the experience of agitation against Government educational institutions in Calcutta during the anti-Partition movement in Bengal. The people behind the movement had decided to set up a national educational institution. The National Council of Education they had set up succeeded in enlisting the help of persons who were something more than mere political figures. With the sympathy of people like Sir Gurudas Banerjee, retired Judge of the Calcutta High Court and a former Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, and Binay Kumar Sarkar, a famous writer, the Council was confindent of the success of the movement. But there was not much enthusiasm for the boycott of Government institutions because people educated in their national counterparts did not have alternative avenues of employment. I, therefore, felt that if we laid too much emphasis on that phase of our programme now, we would not be able to get much response from students and parents and the whole movement would fizzle out just because of this. Some of my friends did not like my opposition and felt that I was trying to be over-cautious.

Few people realise that in our country education is merely a means of earning one's livelihood. A person who goes in for

education has to earn. He is so moulded that he cannot carry on in the old ways. He takes to expensive ways of living. Parents invest a lot of money on the education of their children in the hope that after finishing their studies they would help in maintaining the family income, if not in increasing it. The very nature of English education is such that after leaving the university one cannot think of anything but joining Government service or one of the professions like law or medicine. At first, when the number of educated people was not large, they were able to earn a decent living without difficulty, but with the spread of education and the consequent increase in the educated population, opportunities of earning have progressively decreased. There is a keen tussle for positions. Despite this, the attraction of English education in preference to national education in the matter of securing employment is still there. I, therefore, felt that we should first campaign for the boycott of English schools by students and only if the response was good should we open national institutions. I also felt that once a national institution was opened, it must run efficiently and continuously. I was aot in favour therefore of opening institutes of learning and conducting examinations.

Some of my friends felt that students would not leave their present schools and colleges unless we opened alternative institutions for them. They said that national institutions were necessary for the success of the non-co-operation movement in that sphere. I did not want such bait to be used for promoting boycott of schools. I felt that a clear appeal to them in the name of the country giving a proper appraisal of the drawbacks English education would be preferable. If the students joined us after understanding the implications, their non-co-operation would be more enduring. On the other hand, if they joined the movement thinking that their education and their employment securing capacity would not be affected because of the alternative we offered, their association with the boycott movement would be short-lived because once they saw their hopes were falsified, they would be disheartened and would go back to their old institutions. I therefore urged that students should be told frankly that they had a thorny path before them and

would have to face privation and sufferings. A national institution would come later, I said.

It was not that I was blind to the drawbacks of education as imparted in government institutions. It was apparent to me that it was rotten. Because of the medium of instruction being a foreign language, it involved colossal waste of energy and time. It could not lead to that natural development of personality which can be so easily attained through proper education given in one's own language. Obviously our students cannot have much time for thinking and meditating when all the while they are busy memorising the meaning of foreign words. For this reason alone the system is wasteful. It is not wrong to learn a foreign language. It is good to learn one, particularly today when knowledge of at least one European language has become almost obligatory. But to study a language in order to acquire a working knowledge of it is one thing and to learn every subject through its medium is another. So I have always expressed my opposition to making a foreign tongue the medium of instruction but not to learning it for its own sake. The British had their reasons for making Indians learn their language. They wanted a class of people who could work for and co-operate with them ; they wanted to create a privileged class of Indians who would be like Englishmen in their thinking and outlook. They wanted another cheaper class which could do all the work in the offices in English. They thought that if they could get English-knowing men to assist them they would be saved the bother of learning the Indian languages themselves. It was this policy that formed the foundation of our system of education. Of course, the system did produce men of independent thought and action. But they formed an exception and the rule was clerks and office-workers who thought they had got the reward for their education. I could certainly have nothing to do with such a system but I wanted to idea of national education popularised gradually. On the other hand we were all reminded of the advice given by Gandhiji when we wanted to start a college on the model of the Fergusson College in Poona in Champaran for which we had even collected funds : he had said that it was no use opening a college in any way connected with the Government. If a new

institution had to be opened, it must start with a new national system of education. But the difficulties were clossal and I was cautious.

While we were thus feeling our way, Mazharul Haq opened a national school with Ram Kishore Lal Nand Keolyar, Bar-at-Law, who had returned from England some time previously, as headmaster. Meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Azad had started on a country-wide tour, educating the people for the campaign. They met with some success at the Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University. In Bihar, their visit created unprecedented enthusiasm among the students. It was at this time that the two national institutions, the Kashi Vidyapith and the Jamia Millia of Delhi, were founded.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S 21-DAY FAST*

While the country was discussing the Mahatma's compromise proposals, communal riots broke out in different places. There was trouble in Bhagalpur in Bihar. I went there with some of my colleagues and tried to ease the situation. Meanwhile we had news of riots in Delhi. Gandhiji was very much agitated and left for Delhi. After a few days he had to go to Bombay. Gulbarga in the Nizam's Dominions was the next trouble spot. Gandhiji returned to Delhi as trouble had not subsided there when Kohat, in the North-West Frontier Province, broke into the headlines with violent rioting that took a toll of many lives and that was followed by looting and arson. All this gave Gandhiji great pain. In his agony, he decided to observe a 21-day fast with a view to promoting Hindu-Muslim unity. The fast commenced in the house of his host, Maulana Mohammed Ali, in Delhi.

The news electrified the country and anxiety was expressed for Gandhiji's health from all quarters as only a little while before he had recovered from a serious illness. Dr. M.A. Ansari, who knew most about Gandhiji's physical condition

*From Rajendra Prasad ; *Autobiography*, Chapter 47.

tried his best to persuade him to give up the idea but he could not succeed. However, he took a promise from Gandhiji that he would give up his fast if his life were endangered. After the fast began I went to Delhi in order to be by Gandhiji's side. After a few days he was taken to a bungalow outside the city. Meanwhile, C.F. Andrews arrived to minister to Gandhiji's needs. Dr. Ansari stayed with Gandhiji throughout.

At the suggestion of Maulana Mohammed Ali, a Unity Conference was convened in Delhi in which representatives of all religions, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others, took part. The Rev. Dr. Foss Westcott, the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, also joined the conference which lasted several days. As the resolutions adopted at the conference pertaining to matters of communal conflicts are interesting, I give them below.

(1)

This Conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken. This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential and condemns any desecretion of places of worship to whatsoever faith they may belong and any persecution or punishment of any persons for adopting or reverting to any faith and further condemns any attempt by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to enforce one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others.

The members of the Conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them even under provocation. The Conference further authorises the President to convey personally to Mahatma Gandhi the united wish of this Conference that Mahatma Gandhi should immediately break his fast in order to permit this Conference to have the benefit of his co-operation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of effectively checking the evil which is fast spreading in the country.

(2)

This Conference deplores the dissensions and quarrels that are now going on between Hindus and Muslims in several places in India resulting in loss of life, burning and plunder of property and desecretion of places of worship. The Conference regards them as barbarous and contrary to religion. The Conference tenders its warm sympathy to the sufferers. This Conference is of the opinion that it is irreligious for any person to take the law in his own hands by way of retaliation or punishment. The Conference is of the opinion that all differences, no matter of what nature, should be referred to arbitration and if that be impossible even to a court of law.

(3)

There shall be a Central National Panchayat of not more than fifteen persons, with power to organise and appoint local panchayats in consultation with the local representatives of the different communities to inquire into and settle all disputes and differences, including recent occurrences, where necessary and desirable. The said National Panchayat shall have the power to frame rules and regulations for implementing this resolution.

The Conference appoints the following to act as the Central National Panchayat with power to add to their number up to fifteen and co-opt local representatives as additional members : Mahatma Gandhi (chairman and convenor), Hakim Ajmal Khan, Lala Lajpat Rai, G.K. Nariman, Dr. S.K. Dutta, and Master Sunder Singh of Lyallpur.

(4)

With a view to giving effect to the general principles for promoting better relations between the various communities of India laid down in Resolution 1 and to secure full toleration of all faiths, beliefs and religious practices this Conference records its opinion :

(*i*) That every individual or group shall heve full liberty to hold and give expression to his or their beliefs and follow any religious practice with due regard to the feelings of others and

without interfering with their rights. In no case may such individual or group revile the founders, holy persons or tenets of any other faith.

(*ii*) That all places of worship, of whatever faith or religion, shall be considered sacred and inviolable and shall on no account be attacked or desecrated whether as a result of provocation or by way of retaliation for sacrilege of the same nature. It shall be the duty of every citizen, of whatever faith or religion, to prevent such attack or desecration as far as possible and where such attack or desecration has taken place it shall always be promptly condemned.

(*iii*) That Hindus must not expect that the exercise of the right of cow slaughter by Muslims can or will be stopped by the use of force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court but only by mutual consent and must trust to the good sense of Muslims and the establishment of better relations between the two communities to create deeper respect for their feelings.

Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence, nor will it authorise cow slaughter in a place where it has not taken place before ; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

Cow slaughter shall not take place in a way offensive to the religious sentiments of the Hindus.

The Muslim members of the Conference hereby call upon their co-religionists to do everything in their power to reduce cow slaughter.

(*iv*) That Muslims must not expect to stop Hindu music near or in front of mosques by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court except by mutual consent but must rely upon the good sense of Hindus to respect their feelings.

Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence nor shall it authorise the playing of music in front of mosques where it has not been played before. Any dispute with regard to the latter shall be referred for settlement to the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

The Hindu members of this Conference call upon their co-religionists to avoid playing music before mosques in such a manner as to disturb congregational prayers.

(*v*) That Muslims must not expect to stop by force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of court, except by mutual consent, the performance of *arti* or the playing of music, including the blowing of *shankhs* by Hindus during worship and other occasions in their houses or temples or public places at any time even if the house or temple or place in question is situated in close proximity to a mosque ; but they should trust to the good sense of the Hindus to accommodate them.

Nothing stated in the above clause shall unsettle or affect any local custom or agreement between the two communities already in existence ; any dispute on facts should be settled by the National Panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(*vi*) That Muslims are at liberty to chant *azan* or offer prayers in their own houses or in any mosque or public place not set apart for the religious observance of any other community.

(*vii*) Where the slaughter of an animal or sale of meat is permissible on other grounds, no objection shall be taken to the method of slaughter, whether by *jhatka*, *bali* or *zibah*.

Wherever there is any dispute regarding the sale of any kind of meat in a particular locality or quarter it shall be referred for settlement to the local panchayat formed under Resolution No. 3.

(*viii*) That every individual is at liberty to follow any faith and to change it whenever he so wills, and shall not by reason

of such change of faith render himself liable to any punishment or persecution at the hands of the followers of the faith renounced by him.

(*ix*) That every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or persuasion but must not attempt to do so or prevent its being done by force, fraud or other unfair means, such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under 16 years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardian by a person of another faith. There must be no secrecy about any conversion or reconversion.

(*x*) That no community should attempt to stop by force the construction of a new place of worship by a member of another community on his own land but such new place of worship should be built at a reasonable distance from an existing place of worship of any ony community.

(5)

This Conference is of the opinion that a section of the press, specially in the north, is responsible for increasing the tension between different communities by publishing wild exaggerations, reviling each other's religions and by every means fomenting prejudice, and condemns such writings and appeals to the public to stop patronage of such newspapers and pamphlets and advises central and local panchayats to scrutinize such writings and from time to time to publish correct versions.

(6)

It having been represented to this Conference that in certain places acts of impropriety have been committed in relation to mosques, the Hindu members of this Conference condemn such acts wherever committed.

(7)

The Hindu and Muslim members of this Conference call upon their co-religionists to extend full tolerance to the minor communities of India and to deal with them in all questions of communal intercourse with justice and generosity.

(8)

This Conference is of opinion that attempts on behalf of members of one community to boycott members of any other community and to stop social or commercial relations with them made in certain parts of the country are reprehensible and are an effective bar to the promotion of good relations between the various communities in India. The Conference, therefore, appeals to all communities to avoid any such boycotts and exhibitions of ill-will.

(9)

This Conference calls upon men and women of all communities throughout the country to offer daily prayers during the last critical week of Mahatmaji's fast and to organise mass meetings on the 8th of October in every town and village to express the nation's thankfulness to the Almighty and to pray that the spirit of goodwill and brotherliness may pervade and unite all the communities of India and that the principles of full religious toleration and mutual goodwill declared in this Conference may be adopted and given effect to by members of all communities in India.

The Conference seemed to promise some improvement in the country's atmosphere. It appeared as if members of all communities had resolved to be good and cordial toward one another. It would have been a great thing if that effect could prove lasting, but, alas, it was not to be and the hopes which this improvement raised in people's minds were belied by future events.

After the conference, I devoutly wished for its success, but doubts lurked in my mind. That was because those efforts were not backed by that determination for unity which was necessary for lasting results. Every community laid emphasis on its rights and privileges rather than its duties. It was my conviction that disputes of this nature could be settled only when emphasis was laid on one's duties instead of on one's rights and privileges. However, one could not but appreciate whatever was being done and so I kept my views to myself.

Meanwhile, Gandhiji's fast continued. Dr. Ansari examined him every day. One day he detected more than the usual quantity of acetone in Gandhiji's urine. It was a bad symptom for an excess of acetone leads to a state of unconsciousness and endangers the patient's life, and Dr. Ansari was alarmed. He told Gandhiji that as he was approaching the danger point he might have to break his fast soon. As the acetone proportion in the urine increased, he insisted that Gandhiji should end his fast. All the doctors insisted on feeding him.

Gandhiji replied that although Dr. Ansari certainly knew better than he, he (Gandhiji) would like to be left alone for one night. But the doctors would not agree. Then Gandhiji said that while the doctors had taken every conceivable factor into consideration, they had forgotten one thing—prayer. He only wanted to be left alone to pray. Unwillingly, the doctors left him to himself. The next day when the urine was tested, only normal proportion of acetone was found in it. The doctors did not now insist on Gandhiji breaking his fast. The proportion of acetone maintained its normal level during the remaining days of the fast and Dr. Ansari felt relieved. The doctors plainly confessed to us that medical science could not account for this miracle.

Throughout his fast, Gandhiji used regularly to spin on his charkha. On the last day of the fast, he prayed, did his daily spinning, sang his favourite hymn and then took some orange juice to break his fast. On the occasion, Maulana Mohammed Ali brought a cow from the slaughter house and offered it to the Mahatma as a symbol of his great affection and goodwill for Gandhiji.

BACK TO NON-COOPERATION: OUR ONLY SLOGAN*

It is unnecessary to detail in this survey, the causes which led to the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation movement in

*Under the present juncture, what should be the course to be followed by us ? Some people yet have faith in the Labour Government

September, 1920. It is well-known that India had contributed liberally and even generously, both in men and money, considering her resources, during the Great War. She had helped considerably in stemming the on-rush of the German offensive in the early days of the War, and her gallant sons had shed their blood side by side with that of the Britishers and their Allies in several theatres of War. As the German efforts increased and more men and money became increasingly necessary, pressure was brought to bear upon the people of various parts of India for recruits and other contributions. This combined with a systematic resort to the provisions of the Defence of India Act—involving internment on mere suspicion of a large number of persons—served to create a deep discontent among the people. And when to this was added the economic dislocation of business and rise in prices particularly of cloth, as a consequence of the War, it is easily understandable that the people, as a whole, were in a state of desperation. On the top of all this was made the attempt to perpetuate the Defence of India Act in the shape of the Rowlatt Acts, and to deprive the Mussalmans of what they considered to be their legitimate fruits of victory to which they had contributed, by going back on the promises solemnly made by the then Prime Minister to deal with the Turks in a fair and generous spirit. Again, the promise of Responsible Government, made in the declaration of 1917, had been accepted by the people in good faith. But in place of the fulfilment of the promise made in times of danger, they saw the brazen-faced attempt on the part of Gevernment to go back upon it (in effect and substance) while keeping to the letter, now that the crisis was over and Britain had grained a victory, which was as complete and crushing as

and hope that they would find a way out of this *impasse* by keeping their promises made prior to their assuming control of the Government. On the other side, there is a strong feeling amongst the more advanced section of the Nationalists that the only way lies in a resumption of the Non-Cooperation programme in its fulness. Rajendra Prasad contributed in the August issue of the *Hindustan Review* an article. In the first part of the article—which was concluded in the next issue—he gave a survey of the Non-Cooperation movement, starting with its genesis.

she could never have hoped to achieve without the help of India. The feeling naturally was one of deep resentment not only at the many hardships and privations the people had been subjected to during the War, but also at the attempt to tighten the grip on them, by means of the proposed enactment of the Rowlatt Bills, which were measure of Draconian severity. Naturally there was widespread agitation against the Rowlatt Bills. But Government treated it with supreme contempt, and forced the Bills through the Imperial Legislative Council in the teeth of the unanimous opposition of the elected members—including men of the moderation of the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and the Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri. At the time when all classes of people and all schools of thought felt the humiliation of being under foreign domination and were keen on finding an effective method of protest Mahatma Gandhi came forward with his proposal to start *Satyagraha.*

His proposal came as a relief to the earnest-minded people, who had been smarting under the humiliation, but were unable to devise any effective means of redress. There were great demonstrations all over the country, the like of which had never been seen before. Not only the educated classes but even the masses, whole heartedly joined in the great demonstrations and it seemed as if India had really re-discovered her lost soul. There were riots at some places in the Punjab followed by reprisals in the shape of the Jallianwala massacre and the horrors of the martial law in that province. When the news of these Punjab atrocities (which had been kept secret under a strict and stringent censorship) began gradually to percolate, the fire of indignation, smouldering till then, began to burn fiercely. Nevertheless, Mahatma Gandhi kept it in check and till as late as the Amritsar session of the National Congress, in December, 1919, he stood out for co-operation with Government, hoping (against hope) that the Report of the Hunter Committee, which had been investigating into the Punjab disturbances and the consequential atrocities, would do justice to the people. But the publication of a white-washing majority report and the fatuous action of the House of Lords a little later (approving of the late General Dyer's action at Jallianwala in shooting hundreds of unarmed men and children)

broke even his faith once and for all in the much advertised sense of justice of Government and converted him from one of its strongest supports into one of its bitterest opponents. The result was the inauguration of the Non-Cooperation movement at the special sessions of the Congress held in Calcutta in September, 1920, under the presidentship of that great patriot, the late Lala Lajpat Rai.

It is no exaggeration to say that the moderate politicians who had till then led the Congress, and who had represented the best elements in the public life of the country kept themselves aloof from it, though (be it said to their credit) but few of them carried on any agitation against it.

The country responded to the movement with great enthusiasm as this offered a chance of salvation to a people disarmed and rendered helpless by an unsympathetic foreign Government.

Deprived of arms, untrained for purposes of the defence of even their hearths and homes, divested even of the right of free speech and association and rendered thus wholly incapable of offering any resistance to Government they were in a mood of despair and despondence, and knew not how to end the intolerable system under which they lived and suffered silently. Some youths, here and there, organised secret societies, and having secured a few bombs and pistols killed a few officers, mostly Indian. But there neither was nor there could be any serious or widespread attempt to organise an armed resistance against Government after what had happened in 1857.

The Non-Cooperation movement in its destructive aspect "aimed at striking at British prestige and institutions through which Government had consolidated its moral and physical resources."

The British Government has consolidated its strength by banking upon the goodwill of the people of this country. The wealth and well-to-do and (unfortunately) even some of our

public men, are gained over by it into a mentality of complacent acquiescence in the continuance of its rule by the very cheap expedient of attaching some meaningless words or letters before or after their names which pass in common parlance as "titles of honour." By a strange but nonetheless sure method, we have been drugged into the belief, which we hug so dearly, that all honour proceeds from Government, forgetting the obvious fact that honour cannot stand rooted in dishonour and that there can be no greater dishonour to a man with feelings of self-respect—personal or national than to be under a foreign domination, be it the best of its kind.

Again the British Government in India had built up a false prestige about its justice. There are courts all over the country, many of them presided over by Indians themselves. They are all—with some exceptions in non-regulated areas aided and supported by the best brains of the country, who earn their livelihood as lawyers practising before them. There is a kind of belief which had been sedulously propagated by Government agencies (amongst whom the most powerful, because the most intellectual, are the practising lawyers) that Government had established the rule of law in this land, that it dispensed even-handed justice to all, that before its advent there was neither law nor justice in this country and that its disappearance would let in the rule of terror. Now, it is altogether unfounded assertion that before the advent of the British there was no law and no justice in this country.

We had a system which was cheap, speedy, and really, justice-dispensing, in which the length of the purse of the party did not help to win a losing or false case, in which false evidence had not to be suborned to support a true case, from which the element of gambling was altogether absent, and which on the whole served its purpose without demoralising the people. And after all, what is the value of the much-advertised British justice ? How few are the cases in which Britishers are concerned and in which justice can be expected or is administered as a fact ? How many have been the criminal cases in which Indians have been wantonly done to death and how ludicrously inadequate the punishments awarded

to the British culprits? How inordinately severe the punishments awarded to Indians for even slight wrongs done by them to the British? In his *Imperial Rule in India* (p. 27) Sir Theodore Morison writes: "The people of India commonly say that no Englishman has been hanged for the murder of a 'native.' It is an ugly fact which it is no use to disguise that the murder of 'natives' by Englishmen is no infrequent occurrence...I do unhesitatingly assert that very few Englishmen in India believe that an English jury would even on the clearest evidence convict one of their countrymen of the murder of a 'native'—their moral sense does not endorse the legal theory that an Englishman should atone with his life for killing a 'nigger.' "

There is more on the subject in this outspoken book, but the passages quoted are quite sufficient to bear out my contention.

Above all, how is the law of sedition administered in this country against people, who in all honesty desire and attempt to make themselves and their country free, as every Britisher wishes Britain ever to remain. Are not people aware of the special laws enacted, from time to time, creating new offences and casting new obligations to suit the exigencies of a growingly unpopular foreign rule and to repress and suppress the ever-growing, ever-widening and ever-deepening discontent which seeks to find outlet of expression? And yet it is these courts of law, and their dispensation of justice, which stand before the masses as the embodiment of British domination and British prestige. The army of occupation, with all its engines of destruction, is very seldom seen by the people. The infinitely more effective agency of economic exploitation is also not always visible to the ordinary man in the steet. Nor can the Viceroy or a Provincial Governor—not to speak of royal personages like the Duke of Connaught or the Prince of Wales —be always requisitioned to impress the greatness and grandeur of British rule on the minds of the masses by means of showy processions comprising caparisoned elephants, uniformed soldiers and gilded magnates, all pressed into service to conquer the imagination of a simple, guileless eastern people. The

day-to-day work of building or rather keeping up British prestige is left to the law-courts, and with the help of the large number of educated Indians dependent on them they do succeed most admirably in carrying out the object which Government have in view.

The attack was also directed against the educational system as recognised and instituted by the Government. And in this connection the movement did some constructive work too, as a result of which the Government had to give in to public opinion to a certain extent and modify the educational methods in force. The effects of this wide programme was soon felt in the country :

As the movement has passed through its several stages, while the doubts of the weak and the hesitating have become confirmed, the faith of those who look upon this education as an evil of the greatest magnitude, and as one of the greatest obstacles in the way of freedom has become stronger. No nation can hold another under bondage for any length of time unless it can impress it with its own superiority. That superiority need not be real. A sense of their own inferiority in the ruled is all that is necessary, and nothing creates this sense so successfully as education of the youth organised with that set purpose. The everyday life of our students in Government institution, the treatment of Indian teachers and professors at the hands of their European superiors (superiors not necessarily in learning and culture but in the grade of service, their inclination in favour of Government and against nationalist views and tendencies) and above all the general outlook which is the result of all those forces which work in educational institutions, are positive proofs of the, on the whole, denationalising tendencies of Government imparted education.

The last items of attack were the Central and Provincial Legislatures.

The Central and Provincial Legislatures formed the last item of attack Amongst the older and more experienced politicians there were many who believed that the Reforms (under which

the first elections were held in 1920) gave powers to Ministers to carry out many reforms in the administration and that it was necessary that Indians should by utilising the opportunities so offered prove their fitness for further instalments of Reforms, and that it would be suicidal to refuse to exercise the powers newly conferred. In its ultimate analysis their belief was the outcome of a faith in the declaration of Government that they intended to confer responsible Government on India provided Indians proved their fitness by utilising opportunities of service conferred on them and of a corresponding lack of faith in themselves and their countrymen. The Non-Cooperation movement on the other hand, was based on the absence of that faith in Government declarations and on a conviction that in its totality the British domination in India had in fact worked for India's deterioration—political, economic, and above all moral and cultural—that it was not likely that Government would part with any of their absolute and effective powers unless their hands were forced by mass agitation, that the so-called powers conferred on Indians were a mere make-believe, that the Reforms were but a blind to cover under their showy and glittering exterior the hollowness of the system, and that Indians (instead of being satisfied with tinsel which while appealing to the eye had no intrinsic value) should show their worthlessness by exposing to public view their inward rottenness. It also aimed at turning the peoples thoughts, hopes and aspirations from Government to themselves. The masses joined in the boycott but a small proportion of voters participated in the voting. But the older politicians as a class, with some exceptions, and not a few ambitious nonentities got themselves elected to the legislatures without any real contest. The first reformed councils of 1921-23 consisted, therefore, of only those who were keen on working the Reforms and who had braved the popular opposition and odium to prove and justify the fitness of Indians for responsible Government. Subsequent events have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that their p tiful faith was misplaced, that Government scheme did not propose the emancipation of India, and that Government would yield, if at all, to popular demand only when it feels it must. On account of the strong feeling in the country outside the Legislatures,

Government was at that time reasonable in its dealings with and treatment of those who had gone to the Councils, much against popular wishes, to co-operate with it. But as soon as that wave of popular enthusiasm was on the ebb Government were not slow to show their mailed fist, and those who had gone to pray remained to curse—the more self-respecting and sturdy among them resigning their places of honour and responsibility, while the others stuck on to their jobs with a faith which gave them credit more for those self-regarding instincts which rule human actions and motives than to their much advertised desire to serve the country from inside the Government citadel.

SALT SATYAGRAHA*

Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, went to England in 1929 to discuss the Indian situation with the Labour Government which was then in power. Ramsay Macdonald was the Prime Minister and Wedgewood Benn, Secretary of State for India, On his return Lord Irwin made an announcement to the effect that is declarations of British policy on Indian dominion status was implicit. He hinted at the possibility of holding a Round Table Conference in England to consider the Indian question. This announcement appeared to be an answer to the Calcutta Congress resolution demanding the conferment of dominion status within a year.

If the Government thought that this announcement would clear the doubts of the people and improve the situation, their hopes were not to be fulfilled. A great controversy raged in the press in which the announcement was analysed threadbare. The Liberals appeared to be satisfied with it but the Congress felt that no clear offer has been made by the Government and reiterated the demand made in the Calcutta resolution. It was decided that clarifications should be sought from the Government.

On the eve of the Lahore Congress session, which was held in December 1929, presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru,

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, Chapter 65.

Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal Nehru met Lord Irwin. Their talks made it clear to the leaders that the Congress interpretation was correct—that dominion status was still far away. Those who had thought that it was somewhere round the corner had been misled by Lord Irwin's statement that dominion status was already in action in India. For us it served as a warning that all pronouncements of the British Government should be read and re-read, scanned and analysed, in a dispassionate and realistic manner and for this we felt grateful to Lord Irwin.

The Lahore session of the Congress, therefore, felt compelled to adopt the goal of complete independence and a resolution to this effect was approved unanimously. The Congress also directed party units all over the country to prepare the people for satyagraha to achieve the objective of complete independence. Having noted the unmistakable signs of awakening everywhere, the Congress was emboldened now to take a stand on satyagraha. A few days later the Working Committee directed the country to observe January 26 as Independence Day, when meetings were to be held all over the country, the National Flag was to be hoisted, and a pledge taken by all to work for the achievement of independence. The Congress declaration incorporating the pledge was to be translated into all regional languages so that every Indian might understand it when repeating it. The Working Committee made it clear that at the meetings only the pledge was to be read word by word and the audience made to repeat it and that no speech was to be made.

I was convalescing after my illness and I decided to stir out on January 26, I had several calls to attend public meetings but I was able to attend only two. After attending a meeting in my own village I was going by car to Siwan when the car broke down. When I thought that I would not be able to make it, a police car hove in sight and the officer was kind enough to offer me a lift which I thankfully accepted. I was in time for the Siwan meeting where the pledge was duly taken.

The Independence Day programme was carried out in almost all the towns in India, indicating that the country was now prepared to take a big step for the attainment of independence. Everyone talked of satyagraha. There was expectancy in the air. People were anxiously awaiting the signal to launch satyagraha. Gandhiji was preparing the ground by his writings which injected a new spirit into the people.

At Sabarmati ashram a meeting of the Working Committee was called to discuss whether the country was prepared for satyagragha or not and when and in what way it should be launched. Some felt that the country was not yet fully prepared. But Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru were of the contrary view and were keen on launching satyagraha at an early date. The then discussion turned to the form that it should take. Gandhiji made a strong plea for breaking salt laws. He said that salt was an essential commodity available easily from sea water or other natural sources and should be freely obtainable by poor people whereas people could neither get it cheap nor in adequate quantity. Like water and air, salt was meant to be available to everyone, but the Government banned access to the natural sources and levied a duty on this very essential article. Gandhiji further argued that anti-salt law satyagraha would be easily understood by all and would also be considered just by the world at large.

It was characteristic of Gandhiji to enunciate a major principle from simple things. He thought that once we were able to break these unjust laws, we would be able to exercise control over other laws. When after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy he laid stress on justice for the victims, he thought that if we could get justice for those stricken people, that experience would enable us to fight injustices elsewhere. In the same way, Gandhiji said, by breaking the salt laws Indians would be able to develop strength enough to get other things done by the Government according to their wishes.

Many of us found it difficult to appreciate Gandhiji's argument. We could not understand how the Government could

be expected to do something unless it was compelled to do so. How people all over the country could break the salt laws was not clear. While those in coastal areas could break the laws easily by manufacturing salt from sea water, how could the majority of Indians living in the interior do it ? We knew that in certain places, particularly in U.P. and Bihar, salt was once prepared from saline earth by members of the Nonya caste who had been deprived of their traditional work since the manufacture and distribution of salt became a Government monopoly. Salt laws could be broken only at places where salt could be produced. Further, would the programme enthuse the people ? Would the educated classes be interested in it ? Though Nonyas might succeed in extracting salt from earth, some of us felt that it was not fair to incite these poor and backward people and involve them in the satyagraha. But Gandhiji's decision was irrevocable. He was convinced that salt satyagraha was the best thing to undertake and he was sure that it would galvanise the whole country.

I had my own doubts of the success of the programme in Bihar. I told Gandhiji about the chaukidari tax which every-one had to pay and which was a source of popular discontent in Bihar. In the collection of the tax, the poor were subjected to hardship, their household effects being sometimes attached and auctioned. I was of the view that opposition to this tax would provide a better basis for agitation and would be assured of the people's spontaneous support. Gandhiji did not agree. He said our campaign would be doomed to failure if we started with opposition to the chaukidari tax. "Let us first break the salt laws," he averred, "and then we shall be able to launch other no-tax campaigns if popular enthusiasm is aroused." I kept silent though I was not quite convinced. I wondered why in Bihar we should break the law by making salt, leaving aside such an obvious thing as refusing to pay the chaukidari tax. But I had faith in Gandhiji's experience of the technique of satyagraha and his foresight and capacity to lead. So, as was my wont, I placed my views before him and, when he did not accept them, signified my readiness to abide by his.

Gandhiji then made his plans. He decided to leave Sabramati Ashram on an appointed date and march to Dandi, a seaside village in Surat district, 150 miles away. He hoped to cover the distance in a month and on April 6 to reach Dandi where he would break the salt law on that day. But before launching the satyagraha, he sent a letter to the Viceroy through Reynolds, an Englishman living in Sabarmati Ashram, giving the details of his campaign. As expected, the letter brought no reply. Gandhiji then went ahead with his plans. Before starting on his march he gave strict directions to all Congress committees not to launch any campaign themselves and await his call for satyagraha. The A.-I.C.C. was convened at Sabramati to ratify his plan but by the time it met Gandhiji was on his way to Dandi.

On the day of Gandhiji's departure there was a large assemblage of enthusiastic people outside the ashram. It looked as if the whole of Ahmedabad town had turned out. Amidst enthusiastic scenes and great jubilation. Gandhiji left the ashram with 80 of his ashramites on the long trek to Dandi, declaring that he would not return to Sabramati till he secured Swaraj. Meanwhile, the A.-I.C.C. met in Ahmedabad and I felt that in province where the Congress was not in a clear majority it could not work effectively as the ruling party, because it would have to depend for its support in every major decision on other groups. On the strength of their number in Orissa, the Congress could prevent the appointment of Sir John Dain as Governor It was doubtful if the proposed Assam Ministry could act in a similar way in important matters. The ministry would not be able to carry on day-to-day work and would not be able to carry out the Congress policies embodied in its manifesto. I said that the Congress could form Governments only on some principles and not just fill ministerial posts. But Subhas Bose asserted that the Congress Legislature Party would be able to improve its strength once it accepted office. Sardar Patel also supported his view and the approval of the Congress High Command was given to the formation of the Congress Ministry. The new Ministry took over soon afterwards.

As indicated above, in Orissa Dain was a senior civilian officer. When the Governor of Orissa was to proceed on leave, Dain was appointed to officiate in his place for a few months. The Congress Ministry objected to it. The ground was that an officer, working under the Ministry, if elevated to a Governor's post wherefrom he may revert after a few months would present administrative embarrassment. It is not proper to elevate a subordinate over the Ministry for a short period like this. If this practice were to be introduced, the Ministry may not find it easy to control civilians under them. The Ministry threatened to resign if Dain was made officiating Governor. At that time, the Governor of Orissa did not proceed on leave. Thereafter in whatever Province, when the Governor went on leave, the senior civilian of that Province was not given a chance of officiating.

THE CONGRESS AND THE COMMUNAL AWARD*

The resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress on the "Communal Award" has been subjected to very severe criticism. This is as was to be expected, as it dealt with a very important subject which has naturally exercised the public mind greatly. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the arguments urged against the Working Committee's resolution closely. It should be remembered that the Congress and the Working Committee are not in a position today to write on a clean slate. There are certain commitments, resolutions, and policies which have been expressly or tacitly accepted and acted upon. It is also not correct to think that the Congress can accept or suggest solutions of problems facing the country which are the very best and ideal from a theoretical point of view. It has again and again to face facts and circumstances beyond its control and shape its policy to suit the requirements of the nation which it seeks and aspires to represent. Everyone acquainted with the history of the Congress knows that, rightly or wrongly, the Congress entered into a pact with the Muslim League in 1916 and conceded separate electorates to

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*An article written by Rajendra Prasad that was published in the *Hindustan Review*, September, 1934.

the Musalmans. The Lucknow Pact was accepted by the Government for fixing not only the method of representation but also the quantum of it in the Montagu Constitution. The resolution of the Congress adopting the Lucknow Pact has never been rescinded, as indeed it could not be at the instance of any one party. It is, therefore, not quite right to say that the Congress has always stood for joint electorates pure and simple. It is also worth remembering that the Lucknow Pact was not the creation of the present Working Committee, most of whose members were not occupying the position, which they do today, in the counsels of the Congress then.

The Congress from its very earliest days has tried to conciliate and attract members of the minority communities. This is true not only of the post-Jalianwalla Congress, but also of its predecessors. It is equally untenable to suggest that the Congress in its dealings and activities does not recognise communities as such. It has been one of the recognised conventions of the Congress to shut out discussion or decision of religious or socio-religious matters when a majority of the delegates representing any community are opposed to any such discussion or decision. This, however, is not the same thing as saying that the Congress is a communal organisation. Indeed, it has from its very inception set up pure nationalism as its ideal and has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. At the same time it has refused to shut its eyes to facts and adopted attitudes and taken solutions which fall short of that ideal. This is the only way in which a national organisation, seeking not only to represent but also to guide and educate all the different elements in the body politic of India, could reasonably act. The Working Committee by its resolution has done no more and no worse than carry on this policy of the Congress.

Every Indian must feel ashamed that we are not able to solve this communal tangle to the satisfaction of all by our own efforts. The attempt has been made more than once in India and in England and we have failed. The reasons are obvious. Having no power in our hands, we have to depend

upon a third party and that third party has given a decision. The events leading up to that decision are fresh in public mind. The Indian members of the Round Table Conference had failed to arrive at a settlement amongst themselves and the Prime Minister was asked by some to give a decision. He in turn asked the members of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference to give a promise in writing that they would accept and act upon the decision when given. I believe several of the prominent Hindu members of the Minorities Committee of the Conference gave that promise. Whether in pursuance of that or independently of it, the Premier gave his decision. It contains a challenge to Indian nationalism and promises a revision of the decision in accordance with any solution which the parties concerned agreed to. This promise has been acted up to, at least in one respect, as a result of the Yervada Pact. It is, therefore, necessary to have in view this background when looking at the resolution of the Working Committee. The Working Committee and, in fact, all nationalists have condemned the so-called Communal Award in a language which has varied in virulence according to the temperament of the individual using it but not in substance. In doing so, the Working Committee has given a lead to the country as a whole including the Musalmans in a matter which has evoked such difference of opinion, because the Working Committee conceives it as one of its functions to give such a lead on all matters of public moment. It yields to none in its appreciation of the baneful effects of the communal decision as it stands. It is also clear in its object that that decision has to be altered and that that alteration should be the result of an agreement. It recognises the fact that the Government is not going to alter it as a result of pressure put upon it by a section, albeit the largest section, but still a section, of the Indian people particularly when it has given them the option to alter it by agreement among themselves. So far as the decision and the determination to alter it are concerned the Congress is at one with all those gentlemen in and outside the Congress ranks who are not in agreement with the Working Committee's resolution.

The question, therefore, arises, how are we going to bring about this agreement ? Surely we are living in a fool's

paradise if we imagine that the British Government is going to modify it to please the Hindus. It would be against all experience of at least recent years. Supposing all the Hindus and all the Sikhs joined in saying that they rejected the award—but I am not sure that it is an altogether correct supposition when we remember that the representatives of the Depressed Classes, such of them and as many of them as are likely to be in the next Assembly under the present Constitution, will join the other Hindus in rejecting the award—we shall still have to consider that on the other side there will be Muslims, most of the Christians, whether Indians, Europeans or Anglo-Indians, and perhaps representatives of some other communities also voting in favour of it. There will be a perfect stalemate in the Assembly and the country will be no better or wiser than it proved itself to be in the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference. How is this voting going to alter the decision ? Since everyone concerned has disclaimed the intention of getting an agreement on the communal question or alteration of the decision by coercion exercised against any minority community, one is entitled to assume that every individual and every party aims at its modification by persuasion and agreement.

The question has been often asked : what is the Congress there going to do to bring about modification of the award ? May not the Congress put the same question to those who do not agree with the Working Committee ? If the award is not to be changed as a result of coercion of the Muslims, what other alternative is there except persuasion, which includes education of the Muslim masses, into an appreciation of the anti-national nature of the award and securing its rejection at their hands ? It is utterly wrong to say that the Working Committee has accepted the award. It has not done so and could not have done so when it knows that the bulk of Hindu and Sikh opinion is against it. It will thus appear that the Working Committee and Pandit Malaviya and Sjt. Aney are agreed in their condemnation of the Communal Award and in their determination to get it modified and that modification has to be by agreement of all the parties concerned. The only

difference which emerges is, whether it is necessary, expedient, wise and conducive to the object both have in view to get also a resolution of the Assembly saying in so many words that the nationalists reject the award. The Working Committee thinks that it will serve no useful purpose to do so, specially when so far as the expression of public opinion on its merits is concerned, it has helped to formulate and express it in unequivocal terms. The Working Committee has further felt that an organisation like the Congress, which seeks and claims to represent all the elements in the country, may not reject it when it knows that one community at least as a whole, in spite of exceptions, accepts it.

This position of the Working Committee has been assailed on various grounds. It has been said that the Congress has not only to represent but also to lead and guide opinion in the country. This is precisely what the Working Committee has done in the case. It has both correctly represented the position as it stands and sought to improve it by formulation of the correct opinion on the subject and hopes to bring about that improvement by education, persuasion and subsequent and consequent agreement. It has held that by taking up the position which is favoured by one section, although the larger section, and rejected by another section, no useful purpose will be served. On the other hand, the chances are that its work in the direction of propaganda and persuasion might be hampered. If it could be shown that by saying that the Working Committee or the Assembly rejects the decision its rejection was more likely to be secured and an agreed settlement is the only alternative to the Premier's decision, it seems there is no alternative to the position which the Working Committee has adopted.

It is said that the Musalmans as a body do not accept the award and in support of this assertion the claim of nationalist Muslims that they have majority of the Muslim masses on their side has been cited. Professor Abdul Majid Khan is indignant that the Muslim community is traduced and insulted by the suggestion that it accepts the award. He goes so far

as to say that "the Working Committee have forfeited the confidence of the Muslim masses by not rejecting summarily the Award which neither safeguards their rights nor advances their interests and under which they can never rise to their fullest stature". It gives one's soul pleasure to find such sturdy nationalism and the hope of the Working Committee lies precisely in such sturdy nationalism which is bound to assert itself sooner or later, but the unfortunate fact may not be denied today that this is not the general Muslim attitude. The Working Committee will without a moment's hesitation change its opinion if the Muslim masses through their spokesmen and representatives confirm the view so eloquently put forward. The moment this claim is made good, the main reason behind the Working Committee's decision will disappear and it will be bound to reject the award. The Working Committee will not only welcome such a consummation but is prepared to work for it in its own way. The nationalist Muslims have always laid this claim and the Working Committee is prepared to do its best to help them to make it good. It is no use twitting them that till yesterday they claimed to represent their community and today the Working Committee ought to bind them to their word. Their position is the same now as it has always been. But statecraft and diplomacy have for the time being thrown them into the background and clouded the issues. It is because the Working Committee has faith in the Muslim masses, as much as it has in the masses of other communities, that it has chosen the line of least resistance for approaching them. There is no condemnation involved of the community but only a recognition of facts which bear also the potentialities of the better and more nationalistic elements asserting themselves in due course.

Then it is said that the Congress cannot claim never to oppose what one community approves and in other matters, *e.g.* in changing its creed in favour of independence, it never consulted the Muslim community nor does it represent the entire Hindu community in its campaign against untouchability. On both these points there is no such clear cleavage on communal lines. It will be remembered that it was a Muslim who year after year urged the Congress to change its creed

and not a few amongst the prominent Muslim leaders supported the change of creed. It was under the presidentship of a Muslim that the Congress for the first time at its Madras session expressed itself in favour of independence. Indeed, the complaint of Muslim leaders like the Ali brothers and Moulvi Muhammad Shafi Dandi used to be that the Congress is not genuine in its demand for independence. Whether these last gentlemen were genuine in their demands for independence or not there is no gainsaying that they have had some part in bringing about a situation which has resulted in the communal decision and they accept it. As regards the campaign against untouchability, if a larger section of the Hindu community is opposed to it, there is also a large and growing section which is in favour of it. The Congress is seeking to convert to its view the former by propaganda and persuasion, but there also it has recognised the existence of a class which is regarded as untouchable by a section of the Hindus and is seeking to ameliorate their position. Even in its resolution on this very communal decision, untouchability, as existing for the time being, is recognised.

It is wrong to imagine that the Working Committee treats the resignation of a revered leader like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya lightly. Panditji's services to the country and particularly to the Congress from its very birth have been so great that anyone having the least sense of responsibility and the least acquaintance with its history could not but contemplate with the greatest distress his severance for the time being even on one single point. It is only an overwhelming sense of what the Working Committee considers it to be the right thing to do in the present circumstances that it has chosen to adopt a separate course. It is no less true of the Working Committee that of Malaviyaji and Mr. Aney that they have parted company on this single point of procedure to secure modification of the communal decision with mutual regret. The Working Committee was prepared to give freedom of conscience on this question to all but it was not prepared to allow every difference of opinion even on this matter to be raised to the dignity of a question of conscience. If the members to be returned on the Congress ticket have to do team work, they

have to subordinate their individual opinions to the opinion of the party which works as a delegate of the Congress. No party as a party can work in any parliamentary institution if every member is allowed freedom of opinion. Where, however, it is lifted from the range of mere opinion to the status of a question of conscience, the Working Committee was prepared to respect it.

Is it too late to hope that a via media may still be found and the forthcoming Assembly elections may not be fought on this issue ? But if the worst comes to happen, one can only hope that the election campaign will be conducted with dignity and mutual respect and without bitterness, for, after all, the point of difference is one, while the points of agreement are, I believe, numerous ; and after the dust and the din of the present controversy have subsided we have all to work side by side and shoulder to shoulder for bringing about that consummation which we all wish for, namely, a United Free India.

BEFORE AND AFTER TRIPURI CONGRESS*

The A.-I C.C. session had concluded but the Working Committee members were still in Nagpur when we heard the news that Hitler was threatening to strike at Czechoslovakia and that Chamberlain had gone to Munich to meet Hitler. We feared that a failure of Chamberlain's mission might precipitate a war between Britain and Germany. The Working Committee stayed on to consider what attitude the Congress should take in the event of a war in Europe. The question was how could the Congress, wedded to non-violence, help anybody in a war when it could not commit any violent action. At the same time, we had to think of the fact that the Congress Governments had not been able to carry on the administration purely on the principle of *ahimsa*. They had sometimes resorted to firing to quell riots. The police and the jails were intact. The Congress had no control over the central administration but it had never oppossed the maintenance of an army on ideological

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, Chapter 95.

grounds. If a war broke out, the Congress might be dragged into the conflict.

In a study of these questions, Gandhiji's advice was available to us. Unfortunately, we could not know the views of Jawaharlal who happened to be on a visit to Europe at the time. When the Working Committee wanted to prepare a directive to the Congress Governments, we found that not all the members thought alike. We could not gauge the mind of the President and could not guess what directive he proposed to issue. While in this quandary, came the welcome news that Britain and France had arrived at an understanding with Hitler and that war had been averted.

The election of Congress delegates and members of the A.-I.C.C. was approaching when we had to think of nominating the President for the next Congress session to be held in Tripuri near Jabalpur in March 1939. Many favoured Maulana Azad while some seemed to prefer giving a second term to Subhas Bose. It appeared that Subhas Bose himself were seeking re-election but he never spoke his mind to the Working Committee. He had been elected unanimously for the Haripura session at the instance of Gandhiji himself. Even now, if he had expressed his wish to Gandhiji and all of us, we might have somehow accommodated him. But he and his supporters did not deem it necessary and a rift appeared in the Congress.

When the Working Committee next met in Bardoli, where Gandhiji used to spend a month in winter, we informally discussed the issue again and it was generally agreed among us that Maulana Azad should be elected. Maulana Azad consented but no one spoke of this to Subhas Bose. He also never touched on the subject but we only heard that wherever he went he had been canvassing support for his own candidature. Later, Maulana Azad changed his mind and told Gandhiji. I was in Patna when I received a telegram from Sardar Patel that it had been proposed to nominate Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and that I should join in signing a statement

supporting him. His nomination was approved by us. The contest, therefore, was to be between Subhas Bose and Sitaramayya.

Usually we put up a few names for presidentship out of which one was elected, but there had been no keen contest for several years. The provincial Congress committees somehow seemed to sense who would be the candidate, who would receive the support of the majority, and such a person was nominated and usually elected unanimously. But this time the election promised to be marked out from the rest. A keen contest between those who believed in Gandhiji's ideology and those who did not seemed to be in the offing. Although Gandhiji had retired from the Congress, his advice was sought in almost all matters of importance. Whenever we were in difficulties it was natural for us to approach him and he solved them for us. It appeared now that things might change and that a new Congress President might come in who would formulate his own programme and carry the organisation with him. Though such thoughts as these were on the minds of many, none spoke about it in public. Gandhiji kept silent and never issued any statement about the election. If Maulana Azad had agreed to stand, we had no doubt that he would have been returned by a large majority because the common Congressman liked him and did not want to break with the Gandhian programme. But the people were unable to see a symbol of Gandhiji in Sitaramayya, and so in the election which ensued, Subhas Bose won by a large majority.

On the eve of the Working Committee meeting which was to be held in Wardha to prepare the draft resolutions for the Subjects Committee, most of the members sent in their resignations. We did not see eye to eye with the President and we thought it better to let Bose himself draft the resolutions because the main burden of the Congress organisation would have to be borne by him and his supporters in future. Further, we did not want to embarrass him by our presence in the Working Committee. It would have looked improper also if we, as the Working Committee, were to oppose the official resolutions in the open session. So we wanted to give Bose a

free hand and wanted him to constitute his own Working Committee and to draft resolutions he and his supporters wanted to sponsor. We thought our stand was in keeping with democratic principles. At the time of the Working Committee meeting we, the members, went to Wardha. Subhas Bose did not come as he had been taken ill and so no action had been taken about our resignations. We could have drafted the resolutions to be placed before the Subjects Committee in Bose's absence but, thinking it improper to do this, we postponed the Working Committee meeting till the Tripuri session.

Gandhiji was unable to attend the Tripuri session because he had at that time gone on fast in Rajkot in protest against the State authorities' breach of agreement with the people. There had been conflicts between the people and the rulers of the Kathiawad States for some time. The Congress did not interfere in the Princely States as a matter of policy, but individual Congressmen took interest in the activities of States peoples. Jawaharlal Nehru and Pattabhi Sitaramayya had been Presidents of the States People's Conference. Similarly, Sardar Patel had intervened in the dispute of the people of Rajkot State, in Kathiawad, against their ruler. A settlement had at last been reached, which the Mahatma also supported. Later, the Ruler and the administration of the State went back on the terms of the agreement. Pained at the turn of events, Gandhiji went to Rajkot to persuade the authorities to implement the agreement. When he failed, he went on an indefinite fast.

An atmosphere of tension and indecision prevailed in Tripuri. The presidential election showed up a fissure in the organisation and threatened a deepening rift. Bose's supporters were angered by the resignation of the Working Committee and alleged that we had resigned just to place obstacles in their way. We argued that, on the other hand, they should welcome our resignation and take over the responsibility of formulating the Congress policy and programme if they really carried the majority with them as seemed to appear from the presidential election. It would be difficult for us to work with them because of our difference of outlook on many issues.

If there were no differences, they should not have supported Subhas Bose's candidature. If they were doubtful that the majority was really with them and that votes had been cast for them through ignorance or any other reason, then the election was meaningless and a farce. Our resignation was meant to clarify our position and to avoid a situation in which the programme would be theirs and the responsibility of implementing it would be ours. But because of the President's illness our resignation could not be accepted and the Working Committee was still intact at the time of the Tripuri session.

With the Congress workers divided among themselves, there was confusion and conflict before and during the session. The Reception Committee, however, had made large-scale arrangements for the President's reception and delegates' convenience. For the President's procession, elephants, as many as was the age of the Congress, had been brought from the neighbouring Princely States. A separate Presidential camp, which could accommodate a large number, had been set up. The Working Committee had another camp and the delegates had different provincial camps, which became centres of heated controversy.

The President-elect being in bed and the internal differences holding sway, the Working Committee could not hold a formal meeting. We again tried to see that the President appointed another Working Committee so that we could attend the session as independent delegates. But we failed. We were unable to fathom the programme he had in mind but what little we were aware of was not acceptable to us. The Working Committee, in these circumstances, prepared a resolution surveying the situation and stating that the President was free to nominate his own Working Committee and to have his programme approved by the Congress. Alternatively, we said, he should set up a Working Committee and formulate a programme in consultation with Gandhiji. Subhas Bose did not want to do either of these things, because he seemed to realise that although he had been elected by a majority of votes, the changes of getting his programme approved in open session were very remote. The only course open to him was

either to accept Gandhiji's programme or resign the presidentship. He wanted to do neither but desired us to shoulder the responsibility for his programme. Some of us had talks with him but they made no headway. Eventually, we decided to place our resolution before the Subjects Committee.

Somehow, the ailing President was brought to the Subjects Committee meeting. He lay on the dais attended by his mother and some girls of his family. His brother, Dr. Sunil Bose and other medical men also stood by. He made a short speech, clarifying his views. We moved our resolution which was adopted by a majority of votes. At the meeting it became clear that Bose would not command a majority in the Subjects Committeee, which consists of the A.-I.C.C. members, and that he would have to work in tune with their ideas till elections were held and another A.-I.C.C. was formed But as for the open session, though we felt that the majority of the delegates would support us, we could not be sure until the session was held. In the open session two resolutions were to be moved, one by the President and the other on our behalf.

The open session commenced in an atmosphere of suspense. When the President-elect, who was known by all to be in ill health, did not turn up for a long time, Maulana Azad was asked to deputise for him. Someone read the President's address. At the outset, the introduction of the resolution in the absence of the President was opposed, but it did not seem proper to postpone the session to which people had come from all over the country. Maulana Azad ruled that the resolutions be moved and discussion held that the next day when it was expected that Subhas Bose would be able to participate in the meeting. Suddenly some persons started shouting. Their number was not large, but it is easy for a small number to disturb a big meeting. Jawaharlal Nehru went to one side of the dais and appealed to the audience to maintain silence, but to no avail. The shouting became louder and came nearer and nearer the dais. Jawaharlal went on appealing to the assemblage of 50,000 people to help keep order. Most of the people responded and as the disturbing elements who were a

small number approached the dais, it was easy to mark them out from the rest. Eventually, they quietened down and the day's programme was successfully gone through.

The resolutions were moved, but discussion and voting were postponed to the following day. It appeared that the delegates and the visitors were ill at ease on account of the disturbance. The efforts of these men who had tried to win the sympathies of the audience had acted like a boom sprang and damaged their own cause. The next day the open session was held in the tent of the Subjects Committee instead of the main pandal and only the delegates were allowed entry in order to facilitate counting of votes. Discussion took place on the two resolutions and, when a vote was taken, our resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. Thereafter uncontroversial resolutions were moved and adopted, and there the session ended.

Acrimony and bitterness only increased after the session. We had failed to decide any major issue, only an internal quarrel had been fought in the open. The President's resolution had been thrown out and a resolution which did not have his support had been passed. What next ? was the question now. If the President stood by the resolution adopted, he would have to form a Working Committee with the concurrence of Gandhiji. As Subhas's illness continued, no announcement of the personnel of the Working Committee was made at the conclusion of the session as was the custom.

Bose appeared to be in no mood to implement the Congress resolution. His state of health would not permit us to discuss these matters with him. I met him at Jhamadu Colliery, near Jharia, where he was convalescing under the care of his brother, but did not touch on Congress matters at all. Congress affairs were in the doldrums. Then Bose convened a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. in Calcutta. Gandhiji visited Calcutta at the time but he did not attend the meeting and stayed at Sodepur while we were in the city.

The first day's meeting, which was not attended by Bose, concluded without transacting any special business but it

became clear beyond all doubt that the Congress President did not enjoy the confidence of the A.-I.C.C. When coming out of the pandal, Pandit Pant, who moved our resolution at Tripuri, and Bhulabhai Desai were roughly handled by supporters of the other group, and Acharya Kripalani also was surrounded by men who threatened him with violence. As news of this incident spread in the city, people became enraged at the attack on the leaders and the atmosphere became tense. A disturbance was feared at the meeting the next day, and Jawaharlal Nehru went about pacifying people and prevented the situation from getting out of hand.

As Subhas Bose's position was now untenable, we began to think of his successor. The brutal frankness of Sardar Patel was not liked by Bose and other people. Jawaharlal, who was disgusted with the state of affairs, did not want to take up the Presidentship. Maulana Azad, who would have been the best choice, had an accident at the Allahabad railway station and fractured his foot and so could not be burdened with heavy responsibilities. Neither was he willing to accept the honour. My name was suggested. I did not want to take it up for two reasons. First, temperamentally I am one who steers clear of controversies and, secondly, the next session of the Congress was to be held in Bihar and I would not be able to devote myself to the arrangements if I were to entangle myself in all-India affairs. I thought that I would not be able to improve matters by taking up the Presidentship and that the rot would stop only when elections were held for a new President. But all my arguments had to be waived when Gandhiji directed me to take up the responsibility.

The next day, Subhas Bose sent in his resignation. The A.-I.C.C. accepted it and appointed me President. As I stood up to speak, I heard shouts from a section of the pandal. I stood my ground till the shouting died down. The proceedings were then conducted without any more ado and in the evening the A.-I.C.C. adjourned. When I left the place some volunteers offered to escort me to my residence. On the way, one or two of them, who were apparently sympathisers of the Bose group,

seemed to be bent on mischief but they could do nothing more than pull my jacket. I only lost a few buttons and reached home safely. I spoke to no one of this fearing an increase of tension. When I left for Patna that night, I heard at the station that some miscreants had demonstrated before Dr. B.C. Roy's house, entered it and broken some furniture. In the new Working Committee I announced the next day, I included Dr. Roy and Dr. P. C. Ghosh. Jawaharlal would not be a member but he promised to extend his co-operation to the new Committee.

On return from Tripuri, along with some Bihar leaders, I began looking for a site for the next Congress session. In accordance with the convention of holding the sessions in a village, I first thought of Sonepur, in North Bihar, where the borders of three districts meet and where one of the biggest fairs in India is held every year on Karitiki Purnima in November. Thousands of head of cattle are exhibited at this fair for sale. There are several wells in the Mela grounds and water supply would be assured. I felt that we could buy bamboo and other construction material at very economical rates at the time of the breaking up of the fair for use for the Congress session which would be coming off three months later. The two earlier Congress sessions had been held in Patna and Gaya, in South Bihar, and I thought a chance should be given to North Bihar, considered to be solidly behind the organisation.

But then we had to think of other alternative sites too and decide on the best. So we began touring the province in search of a suitable site. On my invitation, Ramdas Gulati, an engineer who lived in Sewagram with Gandhiji and who was responsible for much of the construction work in Haripura and Tripuri, joined us in the search. We saw Rajgriha, in Patna district, an ancient place with historical associations. It was a healthy and beautiful place, but it was not easily accessible and lacked water-supply facilities. Phulwari Sharif, near Patna, was thought of next but it was too near the provincial capital and thus would lose its importance and at the same time lacked civic amenities.

The last choice was Ramgarh, in Hazaribagh district. The people of Chota Nagpur, particularly Ramnarain Singh, the vateran Congressman of Hazaribagh, had always been accusing us of neglecting Chota Nagpur and now wanted us to hold the Congress session in their area. Ramdas Gulati also favoured Ramgarh and we decided on that site. It has a healthy climate. Held in the midst of forests along the bank of the Damodar, we were sure the session would be a unique one in the annals of the Congress. The actual site was covered with shrubs and they had to be cleared. I deputed Ambika Kant Sinha for this work and he remained in the area throughout and did a thorough job. Ramdas Gulati prepared a draft plan for the arrangements. I stayed in Ranchi, 30 miles from Ramgarh, for some time and used to visit Ramgarh to see the work in progress. Then I felt for a tour of the province for the collection of funds.

AN UNPLEASANT TASK*

As no regular business could be transacted in Calcutta, we held another meeting of the A.-I.C.C. in Bombay a few days after the Calcutta session. An important matter awaited its consideration. Trouble had been brewing for some time on the Congress ministerial front, not engineered from outside the Congress but emanating from within. Some Congressmen had been dissatisfied with the Congress ministries for some reason or other and had been making complaints and hindering their work. The ministries had been working according to the directives of the party and the Parliamentary Committee never interfered with them but remained vigilant to see that the ministries maintained the Congress policy and fulfilled the election pledges. The Congress ministries did adhere to the proclaimed intentions of the party at the time of the election, but a section of the Congressmen always kept on sniping at them. Opposition from the enemies of the Congress would have been understandable and also genuine differences of opinion between Congressmen and the ministries, which could have been ironed out. In fact, the ministries did try their best

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, Chapter 96

to iron them out. But what developed, which genuine Congressmen could not understand and which pained them most, was an organised opposition within the Congress party against the ministries.

Strength to this opposition was extended by Congress dissidents who had been incensed by Pandit Pant's resolution at the Tripuri session directing that Subhas Bose should form a Working Committee in consultation with Gandhiji if he did not want to shoulder the responsibility himself. These dissidents made much of the fact that Pandit Pant was the Chief Minister of the United Provinces and made an allegation that the Congress ministries were opposed to Subhas Bose and had used their influence in seeing that our Tripuri resolution was adopted. An organised effort, therefore, was made to discredit the ministries. Discontented elements like Dr. Khare and his colleagues who had been dropped out of the C.P. Ministry joined this group which tried to wreak their vengeance upon the ministries for the acts of commission and omission of Congressmen like us who were out of the ministries. It was difficult for them to do anything against us directly but the ministries offered themselves as an easy enough target, because they were always doing something or the other and it was not difficult to pick holes in their decisions. Genuine complaints should have been placed before the P.C.C.s, the Parliamentary Committee, the Working Committee and, if necessary, the A.-I C.C., which would have taken action against errant ministers or ministries. It was highly improper for Congressmen to work openly to discredit the ministries in the eyes of the public. But that was what the dissidents were bent on doing and it was necessary for the A.-I.C.C. to take notice.

At the Bombay session, a resolution was moved directing Congressmen not to indulge in sniping at the ministries. Subhas Bose and his followers opposed the resolution, but a majority of the members supported it and was passed. We hoped the resolution would somehow curb the activities of these men but we were wrong. They redoubled their opposition and their injurious activities and we were compelled to take disciplinary action against Subhas Bose.

In open defiance of the majority view of the Congress, Subhas Bose announced a few days later that he would organise a countrywide demonstration against the A.-I.C.C. decision I sent a telegram to him as President asking him to desist from such a course. But he refused to listen and went ahead with his preparations. Demonstrations were held at several places in which Congress workers participated. The Congress could not put up with this kind of open defiance of its directives. After all, the only democratic method to settle any difference of opinion is the method of the ballot, and when a majority has once taken a decision, it ought to have been respected and no action taken to flout it. The demonstrators had flouted the decision of the majority publicly, despite warnings, and the prestige of the organisation was bound to suffer. Action against the detractors became unavoidable for us.

The Working Committee convened a meeting and called upon Subhas Bose to explain his action. He did not attend the meeting but sent in an explanation justifying his action. The Committee, therefore, reluctantly decided that disciplinary action against Subhas Bose was warranted. It was not easy to take action against a Congress leader of Subhas Bose's eminence. He had been twice elected Congress President; his patriotism, sincerity and sacrifices were absolutely beyond question. How could one take action against such a man ? Most of us dreaded the idea. As for myself, I always had affection for him, while Sarat Bose, who was my contemporary in the Presidency College, Calcutta, and lived in my hostel, and I were good friends. Now the question was not one of personal likes or dislikes but one of duty, of deciding whether the Congress could keep quiet in the face of a setback to its prestige. We were therefore constrained to expel Subhas Bose from the Congress. As regards the other Congressmen who had acted with him, it was left for the P.C.C.s to take action against them.

Ever since the Tripuri session, Subhas Bose had been thinking in terms of setting up a new party under the name of Forward Bloc. When he was expelled from the Congress, he devoted himself wholly to the task of organising this party.

When the provincial Congress committees took action against the other Congress supporters of Bose also, they joined the Forward Bloc, which began openly attacking the Congress.

There were two more disputes which came up before the Congress. It was a most unpleasant time that I had during the period of my second term as president. Complaints began to mount against the Orissa Ministry. Once before, when we were in Cuttack, Sardar Patel and I had tried to bring the opposing elements in the Congress Legislature Party together but our efforts did not succeed. Eventually, the matter came up before the Parliamentary Committee. Sardar Patel, its chairman, called for written complaints, stating that, if the complaints were borne out on inquiry, action would be taken against the Ministry, otherwise action would be taken against the complainants. A little earlier, while Subhas Bose was President, he had entrusted me with the work of inquiring into some of the complaints. I made several visits to Orissa and had to wade through lots of papers, hear both the parties and record statements of witnesses. By the time my report, which was in the nature of a judicial decision, was ready, Subhas Bose had resigned. The report now came up before the Parliamentary Board and the Working Committee. The main complaints were found baseless and it was decided to take action against the complainant. But he tendered an apology and action against him was withdrawn. Those who were behind this complainant now came out into the open.

Principal among the discontented Congressmen agitating against the Orissa Ministry were Pandit Nilakanth Das and Godavari Misra, both of whom were opposed to Biswanath Das, Chief Minister, from the beginning. Both of them had been Congressmen since 1920 and were widely respected in Orissa. Nilakanth Das, a member of the Central Assembly at the time of the provincial elections in 1937, had not contested for the Provincial Assembly but was a contender for the leadership of the province. Godavari Misra was elected to the Provincial Assembly. When Nilakanth Das failed in his bid for the Chief Ministership, he began working against Biswanath Das. He began to cast aspersions on the integrity and moral

character of Biswanath Das, which infuriated Sardar Patel who had to warn the complainants before inquiring into their complaints.

When his plan misfired, Pandit Nilakanth Das joined hands with Subhas Bose after his expulsion. His activities became more and more anti-Congress in the Central Assembly to which he had been elected on the Congress ticket. Then he refused to submit to Congress discipline and resigned from the party. At the outbreak of the war in Europe when the Congress ministries resigned, he and Godavari Misra made strenuous efforts to form a ministry. When their attempts to seduce Congress M.L A.s failed, bent on coming into power, they threw in their lot with the landlords. A Ministry was formed with the Maharaja of Parlakimedi as Chief Minister and Godavari Misra as one of the Ministers. They somehow enlisted the co-operation of some Congressmen and threw some Congress M.L.A.s in prison and managed to secure a majority in the Assembly.

The second dispute we had to contend with was that of the Central Provinces where too there were complaints against the ministry. There had been dissensions with the ministry, primarily between Shukla and D.P. Mishra, on the one hand, and Dr. Khare, on the other, and they had ended in the exit of Khare and the formation of a new ministry under the leadership of Shukla. Complaints persisted against D.P. Mishra, a minister in the new Cabinet. The Parliamentary Committee entrusted the inquiry to Bhulabhai Desai but the complainants declared that they had no confidence in him, and I had to take up the work myself. I made a thorough inquiry and gave my decision which was ratified by the Working Committee. Some of the dissidents continued to cry for modification of my report but the decision was announced in the press and the matter was closed. Most of my time was thus taken up in such matters and I hardly got an opportunity to do anything constructive during the presidentship this time. Further, I almost lost touch with my own province but I somehow managed to visit some places to collect funds for the Ramgarh Congress.

CONGRESS AND WORLD WAR*

I was in Ramgarh, looking after the preliminary arrangements for the Congress session, when the newspapers flashed the news that Hitler had invaded Poland. Tow days later, Britain and France declared war against Germany. The European war was on. The British Government declared India a belligerent without consulting her leaders. Jawaharlal was at that time visiting China. Mahatma Gandhi met the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. After the interview Gandhiji issued a statement expressing sympathy with Britain and advising India to offer unconditional help to her. Many in the country misconstrued the statement.

The Working Committee was convened in Wardha to consider the situation. I was not quite well and Gandhiji specially sent Mahadev Desai to Ramgarh to accompany me to Wardha. On the eve of the meeting, Jawaharlal returned from China. The question before us was what attitude to take on the issue of the war. Should the Congress help the war effort and, if so, should the help be unconditional or modified by some conditions? In this violent conflict, how could the Congress, with her declared policy of non-violence, render any help? After several days' discussions, the Working Committee thought of a *via media*. An elegantly worded resolution was drafted by Jawaharlal. Expressing its opposition to Nazism and Fascism, the Working Committee condemned imperialism also and insisted on the British Government clarifying its war aims with a view to enabling India to help Britain voluntarily in her war effort.

This unequivoccal statement led the British to accuse Gandhiji of having gone back on his original statement. Many Congressmen had been opposed to Gandhiji's offer of unconditional help to Britain in an imperialistic war. The fact was that both the parties were wrong. Gandhiji never contemplated that India would help the war effort with men and money. His idea was that the sympathy of a dependent country like India

*From Rajendra Prasad : *Autobiography*, Chapter 97.

would be of such great value to the British that it would enlist in their support the sympathy of the entire world. Gandhiji's statement had undubtedly created a stir in political circles, although when he made it he had only thought of extending to Britain our moral support and sympathy.

At the Working Committee session it became clear that, though wedded to non-violence, the Congress could not refuse to help the British and, if the occasion demanded it, it would not desist from helping them with men and arms. It is necessary to state this clearly because some Englishmen, particularly L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for India during the war, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, and senior officials of the Government of India never hesitated to say later that the Congress did not help the war effort because of Gandhiji's policy of non-violence. The Working Committee resolution, however, made it perfectly clear that if the British Government could declare its aims in a satisfactory manner, the Congress would be forced to help the war effort. Many people in India, and there were many Congressmen too, were sympathetic towards Britain at that time and if she had adduced some proof, as her leading statesmen and newspapers were shouting from housetops, that she was really fighting for democracy, the whole of India would have been behind her unreservedly. But actually, Britain was fighting a war for the defence of the British Empire, although to win over the sympathies of wavering nations, it was claimed to be a war to save democracy. This was to be confirmed very soon afterwards.

After the resolution was adopted, I met Lord Linlithgow twice as Congress President, once along with Jawaharlal Nehru and the second time with Gandhiji and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The Viceroy was then meeting representative Indians of all schools of thought with a view to enlisting India's help in the war. He had made one mistake. As soon as the war began, without consulting anyone, he had declared that India too was on the side of Britain in her war with Germany. The Central Assembly was then in session and popular ministries were in office in eleven provinces, but he did not deem it important or necessary that their views should be invited, as if the war were

not a matter of concern for any individual or institution in India. The Congress Working Committee resented this action of the Viceroy, so did other sections of the Indian people. In these circumstances, it was neither proper nor possible for anyone to say anything till the British clarified their position.

To appease Indian political parties, Lord Linlithgow proposed to appoint two more Indians on his Executive Council so as to give Indians a majority voice in the Council, but at the same time he firmly stated that these Executive Councillors would have the same rights and privileges which former members had enjoyed so far, that is to say, they would be no more than heads of departments without any independent powers. He said that meetings of the Executive Council were held to apprise its members of the developments in their departments and to facilitate discussion of issues but that the responsibility of taking decisions on all important questions was ultimately on the Viceroy who alone had all the powers. He was not willing to countenance any constitutional changes for the duration of the war. Whatever proposals he made were to be fitted within the framework of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The demands of the Congress were two : First, besides clarification of British war aims, it wanted Indian independence to form part of the post-war plans of the British Government ; and, secondly, the Congress demanded that Indian representatives should be given certain administrative powers at the Centre with immediate effect so that they might be able to carry on the Government according to the wishes of the people and thus be able to render genuine help in the war effort. Even if the declaration of future independence were not pressed, immediate transfer of certain rights was absolutely necessary to enthuse the Indian people and to enable them to extend willing help to Britain.

Despite all this, the Congress never followed a policy of hindering the war effort. Always a supporter of democracy as against imperialism, it wanted British imperialism to evolve into genuine democracy in order that all her possessions and

colonies might become free. Of course, Britain never deprecated that ideal of ours and, in fact, she agreed that independence was the ultimate aim of her policy. She only pleaded that India and the other colonies were not at that time fit to govern themselves and that, therefore, she considered it her duty to retain in her hands the responsibility of governing them and preparing them for ultimate self-government. We, Indians, did not accept this position and that was the cause of our conflict with Britain.

At the beginning of the war, there was a lot of talk about democracy, but the Congress, by raising a few inconvenient questions, pricked the bubble of British claims. Our main question was whether the promised democracy would also be for India and other suppressed nations of Asia and Africa or it would be the sole possession of the British and other European nations only. If that declaration applied equally to the people of Asia and Africa, we only desired that it should be announced in plain language and an assurance to that effect conveyed to the people of those areas and some powers transferred to them as a practical proof of future good intentions.

During the period, October 1939 to 1942, India and the Congress got no satisfactory reply to their questions. An effort was made by Britain to camouflage her real objective, which was to keep the Empire intact. Lord Linlithgow made repeated overtures but his proposals could not satisfy any political party. To please the Muslim League he announced that the Government of India Act, 1935 would be considered *de novo* after the war. The Congress had also strongly opposed the 1935 Act and, in fact, except for some liberals and moderates, no political party had agreed to work it. It appeared, therefore, that Lord Linlithgow was making a bid to please not only the Muslim League but the other parties as well. His actions, however, disproved it. He only wanted to set up another party against the Congress and then plead inability to do anything until both the parties were able to evolve a common demand. He thus wanted to show the world that Britain was prepared to transfer power to the hands of Indians but that they were hopelessly divided among themselves, forcing Britain

to retain the reins of Government in her own hands. Lord Linlithgow played this game more or less successfully during his tenure of office.

When our interviews with the Viceroy bore no fruit, we convened a meeting of the Working Committee in October 1939 to decide the next step. The position of the Congress ministries in the provinces had now become untenable and the question was whether it should be allowed to continue. Prolonged discussions followed. A section of Congressmen pleaded for the retention in our hands of whatever little power we had acquired and opposed the idea of resignation by the Congress ministries. They believed that by remaining in power in the provinces, the Congress would be able to render great services to the people, undo any harm caused to them by the war and derive the maximum advantage from any good that the war might bring. Most of the people, however, felt that if the war situation grew more serious, the Central Government would take more and more responsibility on itself and the provincial Governments would be rendered powerless There was no chance of having any Indians of influence on the Executive Council to safeguard the interests of the provinces. The Executive Council itself would be powerless and would be able to do nothing beyond toeing the line for the Viceroy and the Member for War. The public would be expected to contribute to the War Fund and, as voluntary help could not be thought of, the provincial Governments would be in the invidious position of having to resort to pressure in the collection of funds, which was contrary to the principles of popular administration. Withdrawing from provincial Governments would be far preferable to facing such an untenable position of responsibility without power.

The Working Committee, therefore, decided that in the event of the British Government's reply to its demands being unsatisfactory, it would have to advise the Congress ministries to resign. The A.-I C.C , which also met at Wardha, ratified the decision. When no satisfactory reply was received from the Viceroy, the Working Committee issued instructions to the Provincial Governments to adopt resolutions embodying

the Congress demands in the legislative assemblies and thereafter tender their resignations. Consequently, in November 1939, all the Congress ministries in the provinces relinquished office.

The Congress had such a large majority in the assemblies that it was not possible for any other parties to form governments. This only suited the British who could do what they liked by assuming direct control over the administrations. Therefore, in pursuance in Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Viceroy took charge of provincial administrations. The Governors, to whom the powers were relegated, were authorised even to amend and abrogate the existing laws. Soon after the outbreak of the war, on the plea of exigencies caused by the war, the Viceroy had amended the 1935 Constitution to enable him to take over the provincial administrations as and when he desired. The resignation of Congress ministries served only to clear the way for him.

There are some who hold that it was a mistake for the Congress ministries to have resigned and that had they remained in office they might have been able to prevent the excesses and atrocities of the British regime. But these people seem to have forgotten the provisions of the amendment to the Constitution then in force. In provinces where popular ministries remained in power, nothing could be done to prevent such excesses The Ministry in Bengal furnished the best illustration. The Governor had a free hand in the forming and breaking up of ministries. Hundreds of thousands of people in the province died of starvation and the Ministry could neither remove the causes responsible for the famine nor do anything by way of relief for the victims till the Central Government came on the scene to help. With all their so-called powers, neither Fazlul Huq nor Khwaja Nazimuddin could avert that catastrophe. The helplessness of the Punjab and Sind ministries were also evident when the Central Government forced them to adopt measures for the fixation of prices and export of foodgrains.

The powers enjoyed by the provincial Governments were limited, and the Ordinances promulgated after the outbreak of

the war deprived them of even those limited powers. The Central Government thus proved that the powers of the Provincial Governments were illusory and that real powers were vested in the Viceroy. Although the Bengal, Punjab and Sind Ministries stood for helping the war effort, yet the Government of India had no hesitation in overriding them. There is not the least doubt that if the Congress ministries had stuck to office, without a satisfactory agreement between the Congress and the Central Government, they would have been compelled to do things repugnant to the principles and ideologies of the Congress, and unless they wanted to stay as yes-men they would have been forced to resign anyway

In the later years of the war, it became clear that the Congress misgivings in 1939 were fully justified. Churchill announced in plain words that the British intended to stick to what they had got and that he had "not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." The British Premier's and the Secretary of State's statements on the Indian question could have left no one in doubt as to the intentions of the British Government. Therefore, when we asked the Congress ministries to resign, I am convinced we did the right thing. In the then circumstances, as ministers, Congressmen would have been unable to do any good and would have become mere tools in the hands of the Governors for furthering the war effort.

Nevertheless, I cannot say that would have liked Britain to be defeated in the war. I could not certainly reconcile myself to a German victory. Germany had invaded Czechoslovakia because the latter was weaker. At that time Hungary and Poland could not resist the temptation of throwing themselves on the fallen victim to share in the spoils with Germany. When, therefore, Poland's turn to face Hitler's hordes came, I could not help feeling at first that the Poles were merely reaping what they had sown. But when, later, the German army, in a sweep, took Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium, I was deeply distressed, because Hitler made it clear that he would not let any weaker nation survive. My feeling of anger against the British for denying India her rights was somewhat assuaged

and I somehow felt that it was our duty to help the Brirish in defeating Germany and help stop the rot.

I was so much overpowered by these thoughts that I could not help issuing a statement to this effect. I am sure that many Congressmen felt as I did. In spite of the weakness of the British Government and its unjust treatment of India, German aggression has so much staggered us that for the moment we all forgot the acts of the British imperialists. It would, therefore, be untrue to say, as some Englishmen did at that time, that the Indian people welcomed the adversity of the British as their opportunity.

When, in July, 1949, the A.-I.C.C. in Bombay asked the British Government to give an assurance that India would be given freedom after the war as a preconditlon to helping the war effort, I can say that there was no bitterness in the heart of any Indian against the British and a large majority of Indians really thought it their duty to help Britain. They only wanted certain powers to enable them to carry out that duty Without these powers the people could not be enthused.

The A.-I.C.C.'s proposals were adopted against Gandhiji's advice and he, therefore, withdrew again from the Congress. When even that resolution was unceremoniously rejected by the British, India felt the insult bitterly and Churchill's and Amery's subsequent statements only increased that bitterness. If an agreement had been reached at that time, Burma's problem too would have been solved and perhaps Japan would have thought many times before plunging into war. If Japan had been convinced that, with all their resources, Indians were with the British, she would not have had the courage to swoop down on the Far Eastern countries as she did. Malaya, Singapore and Burma would have been spared the experiences which they had to pass through. I am sure that never in her long history has Britain shown such a lack of farsightedness as when she rejected the hand of friendship held out by the Congress in 1940. The only exception, perhaps, was when she spurned the offer of the American colonies in 1775. The consequence of that purblindness was not good for Britain,

though, of course, it has proved to be for the good of the world.

THE PROPOSAL FOR PARTITION EXAMINED*

I. Arguments for Partition

We have discussed at length the fundamental basis of a claim for the division of India into Muslim and non-Muslim States, namely, that the Hindus and the Musalmans constitute two separate and independent nations We have considered various schemes of division of India for cultural and political purposes and seen to what extent each of them conforms to or differs from the fundamental basis laid down by the Resolution of the All-India Muslim League for creating independent Muslim Zones in the North-West and East of India. The League has not given any detailed plan of partition and has contented itself with laying down in general terms the basis for division. We have had therefore to consider what areas in the light of the principles laid down by the League resolution can be constituted into such separate Zones and what the resources of such independent Muslim Zones are and are likely to be. We are now in a position to consider the proposal for partition in a general way from the point of view of the separate Muslim Zones and the non-Muslim Zone and in the setting of international and world conditions as they are developing today.

Prof Reginald Coupland has summarized the argument for partition in a very cogent and forceful manner and I may not do better than quote him at length :

'(1) In the first place the prospect of partition goes far to resolve that complex of pride and fear which has been the chief cause of the recent deepening of the Hindu-Muslim schism. For more than half the Indian Muslims it eliminates the fear of a Hindu Raj and all it might mean for them immediately and ultimately, by cutting them clear out of its ambit. And Parti-

*From Rajendra Prasad : *India Divided*, Part IV, Chapter 34. (Extracts)

tion ministers to their pride by converting them from a minority in one great State into a majority in two smaller ones and by recognizing that they are not merely a community in a composite Indian Nation but a nation by themselves, entitled to its national independence in its national homelands. Moreover it broadens their footing in the world.. Their States would stand side by side with the Muslim States of the Middle East. They would be more fully conscious than they can be today that they belong to a great brotherhood whose homelands stretch far beyond the bounds of India. If, on the other hand, they turn their backs on the outer world, if they acquiesce in a permanent subjection to the Hindu majority in an isolated India, they doom themselves to something like the fate of the minorities in Europe...

'(2) Secondly, Pakistan, it is claimed, will solve the minority problem throughout India as nothing else can. It adopts the balance theory in a form in which alone it can be valid. Muslim States are balanced against one or more Hindu States, to which, whatever their size, they are equal in national status. There will still be minorities in them all...But, though communal homogeneity is an impracticable ideal, though there will be millions of Muslims in the Hindu States, not to mention other minorities, they will no longer constitute a serious problem, for the simple reason that the inter-communal struggle for power, precipitated by the mere approch of India's final liberation from neutral British control, will cease to exist in the Partition States. Coalition Governments and other statutory safeguards for minorities are part of the League's programme for the Muslim States ; but it will be recognized they are essentially Muslim States in which Muslim policy and culture will predominate, just as the Hindu States will be essentially Hindu. Nor will their respective minorities be encouraged any longer to keep up their quarrel with the majorities.. to ensure a communal ascendancy at the all-India centre. There will be no such centre...And the majorities, it is argued, are more likely to discharge this responsibility—and the minorities similarly to become reconciled to their position—because it will be understood on both sides that in

the last resort the "hostage" principle can be brought into play more effectively between independent States than between Federated Provinces.

'(3) Thirdly, it is claimed that Partition will ease the problem of defence for all India...The North-West Frontier will lose all importance once a Muslim state is established in the North-West. The tribesmen and the people beyond the frontier are all Muslims. They will lose all religious and political fervour for *jehad* against non-Muslims once they find that they have to reckon with their brothers in Islam.. The position could be stabilised, moreover, by non-aggression treaties of full-scale alliances between Pakistan and her Muslim neighbours. Why should she not make a fifth subscriber to the Pact of Saadabad which bound together Turkey, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan for mutual security in 1937 ?

'(4) Fourthly, in an undivided India, when military organization is in Indian and mainly Hindu hands, the proportion of Muslims in the Indian army is bound to be reduced...In the event the proportion of Muslim soldiers, which in 1939 was more than one-third and is now 30.8 per cent, would fall to less than one quarter. This would not only affect the standard of living in the Punjab, which, as has often been pointed out, owes so much to the pay and pensions of Punjabi troops. It would give Hindu Raj the ultimate guarantee of Military Power.

'(5) Fifthy, by Partition and only by Partition, it is said, can Indians Muslims acquire the power of economic self determination. Hindu-Muslim antagonism has always had its economic side, and one of the chief reasons why the Muslims dread the prospect of a Hindu Raj is the power it would give the Hindus to confirm and strengthen their economic domination in all parts of India....The virtual monopoly possessed by the Hindu shop-keepers and money-lenders in retail trade and marketing even in an overwhelmingly Muslim countryside, the Hindu preponderance in the growth of urban life, in the new professional and commercial middle class, even in the Punjab or Sind—all that was bad enough, but the rise of industrialism

made matters worse... The North-West Muslim homeland is overwhelmingly agrarian. Its population amounts to 12.3 per cent of the population of British India, but so far as can be estimated, the population of its industries is only 5.1 per cent of those of British India and that of its mineral development only 5.4 per cent. Bengal as a whole is much more highly industrialized. It has 20 per cent of the population of British India, and, to reckon by the number of workers employed in factories, 33 per cent of its industry. But the industrial area is mainly that of predominantly Hindu Calcutta and its neighbourhood ; apart from Calcutta the North-East Muslim homeland is even more dominantly agricultural than the North-West. Indian industry, in fact, is located mainly in Hindu areas ; it is financed and owned mainly by Hindu capitalists ; it provides livelihood mainly for Hindu labour... Pakistan at least could control its own economy. In the North-West, at any rate, it could establish and protect its own industries Instead of sending its raw cotton to the mills of Bombay, it could build more mills of its own and protect their products with a tariff. And later on if capital were available. it could apply its great reserves of water-power to further industrial development. Karachi, too, might be developed still it eclipsed Bombay as the port of entry for all North-West India...'[1]

II Arguments for Partition Answered

Let us consider each of the points mentioned above.

(1) It may be noted how difficult, if not impossible, it becomes to give cool and dispassionate consideration to such important matters when prejudice and passion have been worked up to a high pitch. Ordinarily the complex of pride ought to be an antidote to the complex of fear but if Prof. Coupland's analysis is right, they both co-exist. What after all is the complex of fear due to ? Ever since the British acquired political power and took charge of the governance of India, it is they who have been governing and ruling the country. If Muslims have lost their position of advantage and superiority it is not on account of Hindus or other non-

1. R. Coupland : *The Future of India*, pp. 75-9.

Muslims of India abusing their political power—of which they were deprived just as the Muslims had been. It is a historical fact that in the earlier days of British rule, the Muslims were more suspect than the Hindus and it is also undeniable that for some years they were oppressed and suppressed more than the Hindus. But it is equally undeniable that when it was discovered that the Hindus were beginning to challenge the authority of the British they decided that the time had arrived when the policy of patting the Hindus on the back should be changed and the Muslims given their due turn of receiving a patting. The result of this change in British policy has undoubtedly been the creation of suspicion and distrust among the Hindus and Muslims of each other, leaving the third party in the unmolested and undisturbed possession of power for the time being. A dispassionate study of events and an unprejudiced consideration of the situation should have created distrust of the third party's motives and activities but unfortunately a curious twist has been given. The backwardness of the Muslims cannot be attributed to anything that the Hindus were primarily responsible for, but to the policy of the British Government in whose hands all power has remained concentrated for more than 150 years.

But more than this there is a genuine fear generated by the declarations of the protagonists of partition. I will quote here some extracts which will show that the fear of an attempt to re-establish Muslim rule in the wake of separation is not unfounded. Mr F.K. Khan Durrani introduces his book *The Meaning of Pakistan* with a Preface written so late as the 12th of November 1943, in which the following passage occurs : 'There is not an inch of the soil of India which our fathers did not once purchase with their blood. We cannot be false to the blood of our fathers. India, the whole of it, is therefore our heritage and it must be reconquered for Islam. Expansion in the spiritual sense is an inherent necessity of our faith and implies no hatred or enmity towards the Hindus. Rather the reverse. Our ultimate ideal should be the unification of India, spiritually as well as politically, under the banner of

Islam. The final political salvation of India is not otherwise possible.'[2]

'It is necessary', says 'A Punjabi', 'to make it clear that the separation of our regions from Hindu India is not an end in itself but only a means for the achievement of an ideal Islamic State. The proposed separation will undoubtedly lead to our emancipation from the economic slavery of the Hindus. But as our objective is the establishment of an ideal Islamic State, it also denotes complete independence. After independence has been achieved, it would be impossible for us to maintain for long, in an un-Islamic world, our ideal of an Islamic State. As such, we shall have to advocate a world revolution on Islamic lines. Consequently, our ultimate ideal is a world revolution on purely Islamic lines. Separation, emancipation from economic slavery of the Hindus, and freedom from the constitutional slavery of the British are only some of the means for the achievement of our ultimate ideal of a world revolution on completely Islamic lines.'[3]

'Muslim minorities have lived in the past in various parts of the world on the best of terms with the members of other religions. But they have never accepted the role of a minority wherever, in view of their numbers or physical strength, they felt themselves strong enough to form an independent Muslim State...This movement for independent Muslim States in India will give a tremendous encouragement to similar movements in China and Russia where Muslims have so far been assigned the status of minorities.

'In Central Asia, Muslims are a majority of 95 per cent out of a population of 80 millions and yet at present they are kept under subjection by the Chinese and Soviet Government.

'Islamic political problems are everywhere of an allied nature. Liberation of one Muslims country will directly affect

2. F.K. Khan Durrani : *The Meaning of Pakistan*, p. x.
3. *Confederacy of India*, by 'A Punjabi', pp. 269-70.

another. The fate of Muslims in India will have direct repercussions in other parts of the world, particularly in the Western Provinces of China and Southern and Eastern parts of Russia where Muslims are in a majority. Acceptance of minority status within the sub-continent of India will besides sealing once for all the fate of 90 million Muslims in India, lead to permanent enslavement of 30 millions of Muslims in Soviet Russia and 50 millions in China.

'It is quite natural to suppose that if India achieves independence as a united country under the aegis of the Congress, it will enter in future into permanent alliance with China and Russia so as to keep the Muslims in the latter three countries under permanent domination. The creation of an independent Muslim State in Central Asia will always be viewed with suspicion by the future Congress Government in India as this will lead to a movement for separation among the Muslims in India as well.'[4]

'The desire of the Indian Muslims to have Muslim States of their own is a part of a movement for the unification of the Muslim World (*Silsila-i-Jamia-Vahdat-Umam-Islam*) started in Turkey during the lifetime and at the instance of the late Ataturk under the patronage of the late Syed Jalil Ahmad Sinyusi. One of its aims is to create more Muslim republics in all those parts of the world which are predominantly Muslim, in addition to the Muslim States already functioning. Among the ten newly proposed republics one is to consist of Muslim Bengal, another is to be constituted by the Muslim North-West India and the third by the Hyderabad State.'[5]

In view of these declarations no one can blame non-Muslims if they look upon the proposal for partition as the thin end of the wedge which in course of time is intended to complete its work by reconquering India for Islam, by freeing the Muslims of Central Asia from the yoke of China and

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4 Mr. M.R.T. in *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*, pp. 60-7.

5. Ansari : *Pakistan—The Problem of India*, p. 47.

Russia and ultimately by bringing about a world revolution on Islamic lines. The ambition of those who see these visions has to be admired, even though they may have been seen in the background of suspicion and distruct of Hindus, Chinese and Russians, who are considered as having no other business than that of suppressing the Muslims—for which there is no foundation

It may also be noted that this objective of the conquest of India and of the world for Islam belies the fear that the Hindu majority will oppress this virile Muslim minority with such high aspirations.

(2) It is difficult to understand how the creation of two new Muslim States out of India will solve the minorities problem in India and in the new States. There is no country in the world which has a completely homogeneous population. In the very nature of things there are bound to be minorities in each country and India is no exception, nor will the Muslim and non-Muslim Zones of India after partition be exceptions. The expedient of doing away with the Muslim minority by exchange of population between the Muslim and non-Muslim Zones has been rightly ruled out as impracticable both on financial and human grounds. We have seen the size of minorities in the Muslim Zones. The non-Muslims in the North West Zone will be 25 or 38 per cent of the population according at the predominantly non-Muslim districts of the Punjab are excluded from or included in the Muslim Zone. Similarly in the Eastern Zone the non-Muslims will constitute 31 or 48 per cent of the population according as the non-Muslim districts of Bengal and Assam are excluded from or included in the Eastern Zone. If we take the North-Western and Eastern Zones together, the Muslim population will be 71.56 or 55.23 per cent according as we exclude or include the non-Muslim districts of the Punjab, Assam and Bengal. The Muslims left behind in the non Muslim zone of British India will be only 10.75 per cent of its total population if we exclude the whole of the Punjab and the whole of Assam and Bengal from the non-Muslim zone and 13.22 per cent if the

non-Muslim districts are included in the non-Muslim zone and excluded from the Muslim zone.

Out of a total population of 793.95 lakh Muslims in British India no less than 202.95 lakh (*i.e.* 25.59 per cent), or 299.94 lakh (*i.e.* 37.77 per cent) Muslims will be left in the non-Muslim Zone, according as non-Muslim districts in Assam, Bengal and the Punjab are included in or excluded from the Muslim zones. Their percentage from Province to Province will vary between 1.68 in Orissa and 15.30 in the U.P. and will be 33.22 in the small Province of Delhi.

On the other hand, the number of non-Muslims in the North-Western Zone will be 138.40 lakhs or 61.46 lakhs and in the Eastern Zone 340.64 lakhs or 134.79 lakhs according as the non-Muslim districts are included in or excluded from the Muslim Zones. In other words, there will be no less than 479.04 lakhs or 196.25 lakhs of non-Muslims if the two Muslim Zones are taken together according as non-Muslim districts are included in or excluded from them. Thus the total population of minorities—Muslim and non-Muslim—in the non-Muslim and Muslim Zones will be no less than 681.99 or 496.19 lakhs according as non-Muslim districts are included or not in the Muslim Zones.

There will thus be formidable minorities, if numbers are considered, in the Hindu and Muslim Zones. The non-Muslim minorities will be much greater than the Muslim minorities, being no less than 25 or 38 per cent in the North-Western Zone and 31 or 48 per cent in the Eastern Zone as against 13.22 per cent or 10.75 per cent of Muslims in the non-Muslim Zones according as the predominantly non-Muslim districts are excluded from or included in the Muslim Zones.

Thus while the Muslim minority in the non-Muslim Zone or Zones will be spread over a tremendously large area from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Bengal to the Punjab, and so ineffective in any particular area, the non-Muslim minorities will be concentrated in the two Muslim Zones in a compact area and will be therefore quite effective

as minorities in asserting their rights and demanding their privileges.

Elimination of minorities would be possible only if there is an exchange of population on a vast scale. Exchange of population can be on a voluntary basis or compulsory. Voluntary migration of so many millions of Muslims and non-Muslims from the non-Muslim and Muslim Zones is inconceivable...Then the cost of moving such large populations, uprooting them from where they have remained settled for generations and settling them in altogether new surroundings, and the loss of property involved in the process, even though compensation may be provided for, will impose a burden which neither the Muslim nor the non-Muslim States will be able to bear. The suffering will be immense and the scheme financially and administratively impossible of accomplishment. In case of compulsory exchange all these difficulties will be increased a hundred-fold, and to all the other difficulties will be added the difficulty of shifting the population under police and military guard—which is unthinkable.

The hostages theory cannot work in practice. One wrong cannot justify another. Even the old law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth did not provide for one man's eye or one man's tooth for the sin of another, nor did it justify the sin of one man being visited on another man ; much less can any one justify on any human or moral principle the rule that one set of persons should be victimized or oppressed or tyrannized over for the fault of another set of men whom they do not know and to whose acts of commission or omission they were not parties in even a remote manner and with whom they had nothing in common except that they both worshipped God in a particular way. To use the words of an eminent Musalman, 'the hostage principle will not work, and if it does, it will shift the basis of politics from civilization to barbarism.'[6] And despite what the protagonists of Pakistan may say I refuse to believe that the better mind of the Muslims or non-Muslims will ever consent to revert to this barbarism.

6. Sir Sultan Ahmad : *A Treaty between India and the United Kingdom*, p. 84.

(3) and (4) Nor will Pakistan ease the problem of the defence of India either on the North-Western or Eastern Frontier of India. It is said that the tribesmen and people beyond the North-Western Frontier are all Muslims, and once a Muslim State is established there, they will lose all religious and political fervour for *jehad* against non-Muslims. This hope has no basis in fact and no warrant in history. It will not be for the first time in Indian history that there will be a Muslim state in India. Indeed, right from the time when Qutbuddin Aibak made himself the Sultan of Delhi down to the time when the Sikhs established themselves as rulers in the North-Western corner of India there has always been a Muslim state. All the invasions of India from the corner during this long period of more than 600 years were by Muslims against Muslim rulers and not against Hindu rulers as there was no Hindu ruler then....

This is so far as invasion from the North-West is concerned. There is not even this excuse available as regards the Eastern Frontier which is now no less exposed than the North-Western Frontier. The only effect of the creation of an independent Muslim State on the East will be to deprive non-Muslim India of its natural defence without any corresponding gain to the Muslim state of the sort pleaded in favour of the North-Western Muslim Zone.

The argument, such as it is, is applicable only to the North-Western Muslim Zone. The very reason that it is put forward as an argument in favour of easing the problem of defence makes the question of defence of the non-Muslim zone more difficult. If there is religious and political fervour for *jehad* against a non-Muslim State of India, the same will become intensified by the creation of a Muslim State within the natural boundaries of India, when the strong natural defence offered by the mountains on the North-West of India is given up by non-Muslim India and it is left to defend its territory as best it can without the aid of such natural barriers. If there is any basis for this argument in favour of Pakistan, the non-Muslims will be perfectly justified in apprehending, particularly after the declarations of the long-range objectives of the establish-

ment of Pakistan mentioned earlier, that the proposal to deprive them of the natural defence of the country has a sinister motive behind it, and this may induce them not to agree to a partition in any case.

There may, however, be much to be said in favour of Dr Ambedkar's thesis that 'a safe army is better than a safe border.'[7]

The question of defence has to be considered in the light of the latest developments in the nature and form of armaments and the technique of strategy rendered necessary thereby. But even in view of the old technique there will be a considerable sea-coast left to be defended by the Muslim State both in the North-West and in the Eastern Zone, apart from the enormous sea-coast left to be defended by the rest of India. All this at once raises the question of the resources of the Muslim and non-Muslim States for purposes of defence. In any case 'it is a matter of vital importance to all inhabitants of India that her defences do not become disorganized and many-sided, too elaborate to be effective and too expensive to be maintained ; her position in the international world must be fully assured.'[8]

(5) By partition and only by partition, it is said, can Indian Muslims acquire the powers of economic self-determination. There are two aspects of the economic question. One relates to the loaves and fishes of office. The Muslim zones, if converted into independent states, can hardly improve the position of the Musalmans in this respect in those areas. The percentage of public employment is already fixed for the various communities, and if it is considered inequitable or unjust in any particular it can be revised. But unless it is intended that non-Muslims shall be practically excluded from State employment or reduced to a position of inferiority on account merely of their religion, it is difficult to understand how their proportion could be much altered. Besides, it should be remembered that it is in respect of employment by the

7. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 95.
8. Sultan Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

State that any reciprocity between Muslims and non-Muslims in their respective states can best be given effect to without raising serious international complications. With their larger proportion in the population in the Muslim states, the non-Muslims will always be in a stronger position than the Muslims in non-Muslim states. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for Muslims in non-Muslim states, with a population of 1 to 13 per cent of Muslims, to claim the same proportion or weightage in services as the non-Muslim in the Muslim states with their population ranging between 25 and 48 per cent. The result is bound to be a reduction in the percentage of Muslim employees in the non-Muslim states without a corresponding reduction in the number of non-Muslim employees in the Muslim states on the basis of fairness and reciprocity. Any agreement as regards weightage will be open to revision in case of separation, for the simple reason that such agreement did not contemplate separation, and what may be conceded to members of the same state cannot and need not be conceded in case of out and out separation. The Muslims in Hindustan thus stand to lose in respect of state employment without any corresponding gain to Muslims in the Muslim states, even if it be assumed that larger emplayment to Muslims in the Muslim states will be any consolation or economic advantage to Muslims in Hindustan in the face of the loss of employment.

The second aspect relates to economic improvement by industrial expansion. Now it cannot be asserted that the dominant position which non-Muslims are said to occupy in industry in India is due to any political advantage that they have enjoyed. Whatever political power there is or has been in the country has been enjoyed neither by Hindus nor by Muslims but by the British, and if Hindus have attained a stronger position than Muslims, it is not due to their political dominance, which they have never enjoyed, but to their enterprise. If economic superiority were due to political dominance determined by their proportion in their population, the Parsis would be nowhere in the picture, as they form an infinitesimal percentage of the population of India. Yet they hold and occupy a position which is inferior to none, if not superior even to that of the Hindus......It is also worth

remembering in this connexion that some Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab have established their industrial concerns even outside the Punjab by sheer dint of their ability and enterprise.

III. Arguments against Partition

The grounds on which separation is claimed are thus either unsubstantial or such as are not likely to be accepted as a just and fair basis for separation. On the other hand there are very substantial reasons against separation.

We may shortly indicate some of them here.

(1) The days of small independent states are numbered if not gone already. Recent experience has shown that no small state can preserve its independence. Even large states are hard put to it to preserve it. The natural tendency is in favour of combinations of states. Something in the nature of a Super-State even above the bigger states is not beyond the range of practical politics today. It would therefore be flying in the face of world forces to reduce the size and strength of India and establish in its stead a number of small states. It may well be that the spirit of separation may not end with the partition of the Muslim zones and ones it begins to operate it may lead to a situation in which India may have to be cut up not only into Muslim and non-Muslim states but even the Muslim and non-Muslim states may be cut up into several smaller states apart from the states of the Princes. This will make India, if it ever attains independence after being thus cut up into numerous small principalities, a house divided against itself and exposed to intrigues by foreign powers. As a result all its component independent states wiil be weak, unable to protect themselves against foreign aggression, and liable to be played against one another.

(2) The national resources of the country as a whole can be much better utilized to the benefit of all, if there is mutual accommodation and agreed joint action, which will become impossible in case of independent states. The mere fact that two states are independent puts up a barrier against such mutual accommodation and joint action between them. Planning

on a large scale becomes impossible in case of small states, all of which are not equally well endowed by nature and most of which have to be dependent on others for some very important article or other absolutely necessary for the welfare and protection of a modern state. The larger the area, the greater the variety, the wider the distribution of natural resources—agricultural, mineral and power producing—the better the chances of a planned economy. India will have lost this advantage as a result of division, and in this respect the Muslim states on the North-West and East will be the worst sufferers, as has been indicated elsewhere in this book. We have seen how the Muslim states will not have the resources to run the administration and meet the cost of defence.

(3) The crying need of India today is that the state should spend more and more on the nation-building departments. India has suffered immeasurably in the past under the British Government which has regarded itself more as a police state than anything else, neglecting and starving the nation-building departments. The whole country has a great lee-way to make up and the Muslim states will be no exception to this. Division of the country will inevitably lead to reduction of resources and make it difficult for each of the Muslim and non-Muslim zones to meet this growing demand.

(4) The modern tendency even in Muslim countries is to base politics and economics more and more on other considerations than religion. Whatever the Muslim League and the protagonists of Pakistan may say, there is no doubt that the Muslim states of the world today are becoming—if they have not become already—secular states, just like the Christian countries of Europe. The question is whether Indian Musalmans will be able to turn the tide of events and establish and maintain the state on any other basis in India.

(5) It is well known that the proposal for partition has aroused strong opposition from all non-Muslims and also from Muslims. It is not for me to say whether the Muslim League or those other groups like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Jamiat-ul-Mominin, the Ahrars, the Nationalist Muslim organizations,

the All-India Shia Conference and others represent the majority of Muslims. The fact remains that these latter have expressed their opposition to separation. Whatever the position may be so far as Muslims are concerned, the Hindus and the Sikhs have declared their unequivocal determination to resist partition. This is bound to become more pronounced and more bitter with the persistence with which the proposal for division is pressed. It is difficult to forecast what shape this conflict may take in the future. One thing is certain : partition is not likely to be attained with the goodwill of those most concerned, and this ill-will is bound to persist on both sides, even if the proposal succeeds, even after the separation is effected. Distrust which is the basis of the proposal is bound to grow and any hope that after separation things will settle down and the independent states will soon become friendly will have been built on sand. The chances are that bitterness and distrust will make mutual accommodation more difficult and necessitate the maintenance of protection forces on both sides. Economic warfare not beyond the range of possibility, even if nothing worse happens.

(6) All India is bound to make the position of minorities in the independent states infinitely worse. As a result of this conflict between the majorities in the Muslim and non-Muslim Zones they will have lost what sympathy and goodwill they should have and their position will have become far worse than what it is today. For the minorities it will veritably be a case of jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The non-Muslim minorities will have the situation forced upon them, if the proposal succeeds. But the Muslim minority will have chosen it, worked for it and extorted it from the non-Muslims and could not blame any one else for it.

Further, as explained elsewhere the minorities in the Muslim states will be better able, on account of their numbers and concentration, to protect themselves than the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim zones on account of their small size and because they are dispersed over a vast area. Nor will there be much chance of any reciprocity in regard to privileges and concessions for the simple reason that the Muslim states will

not be in a position to reciprocate adequately and the non-Muslim state will have no adequate inducement for invoking reciprocity.

AT THE FEET OF MAHATMA GANDHI*

Mahatma Gandhi did not admit of any distinction between what is called life and death. The soul is immortal ; the body may change its shape or form, and it is only the body which undergoes this change as a result of death. He, therefore, used to say that man should always be ready for death. A few days before his assassination, some of those who actually did murder him, had thrown an explosive at his prayer meeting. They wanted to kill him that day. But as Gandhiji was absorbed in meditation at the time and the confusion they expected did not result from their action, their attempt came to nothing. Perhaps Mahatmaji realised that day that some people were bent upon encompassing his death. But he did not care. He would not allow any precautions to be taken for his protection—would not even countenance the search for arms of those who attended his prayer meetings. God would protect him, he would say, if He destined his body to be yet of service in this world. That was why he set himself against the adoption of security measures for his protection, and fearlessly went about his work everywhere.

Gandhiji was on his way to his prayer meeting when the assassin pushed his way through the crowd, went up to him on the pretext of offering his obeisance, and shot him at close range. As he fell, Gandhiji murmured : "Hey Ram." He could not have died more beautifully than he did ; for not only was his mind concentrated on God as he made for the prayer meeting, but he also took God's name even as he fell.

'Life after life, seers go on seeking Him ; but, at the last moment, they cannot utter God's name."

But that name—Ram—came unbidden to Gandhiji's lips. What finer reward could he have had for a life of dedication

*From Rajendra Prasad : *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi*, last chapter titled "Conclusion."

and prayer ? He was shot because he had espoused a cause the attainment of which had been one of the objectives of his life-long efforts. All his life he had worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. When the time came he devoted all his strength to the vindication of the spirit of non-violence, which, at the risk of his own life, he pressed into service for the protection of Muslims. And, in doing so, he fell to the assassin's bullet with the greatest happiness.

The whole nation was stunned and plunged into grief on receipt of the news of his murder. Even those Muslims who had looked upon him as their enemy came to realise that they had never had a better friend. He is dead, but his deathless spirit is carrying on the task on which he was engaged during his life. Time would have come when the whole world would have listened to his voice, and would have been drawn to understand and accept his principles of truth and non-violence. But perhaps God willed that that voice should reach out only from the spirit to the spirit And that is precisely what has happened. Although, all the countries, including India,—and that too under a Government by his own followers—are maintaining armies, and thus in the ultimate analysis depending upon force, people are increasingly coming to realize the futility of war, and beginning to appreciate the significance of non-violence. The spirit is calling to the spirit ; and Gandhiji, even though he is dead, is engaged upon the holy task of revivifying the world.

And it is the sacred duty of Indians to share in the completion of that task, for Gandhiji had only partially succeeded in establishing the rule of non-violence. Society should be so re-constituted as to give the least cause for the development of violent tendencies and to provide for the greatest encouragement for the growth of the non-violent spirit in man. But such a social order can be established only when every individual makes a point of devoting himself to it and of moulding his life to that end. It was with a view to achieving that end that Gandhiji would enunciate his eleven vows every day at the time of prayer—the vows of non-violence, truth, non-possession, *brahmacharya*, non-acquisition, physical labour,

I am unshakably of the opinion that the harsh realities of life will compel us to go back to Gandhiji's ways.

India is independent now, and is free to fashion her destiny according to her own will. We have before us the example of other countries, notably of Europe and America. We believe that their people are very happy because their *per capita* income is higher than that of our own and because they have all the resources that make for a comfortable life ; and, every day, they are increasing their resources and their capacities for more amenities. When we see these things, we feel that we ought to bring our own country in line with them, and direct our efforts to that end. It is true that an empty stomach does mot make for devotion to God. Mahatmaji also used to say that it was futile to speak of high principles to a man who lived on the edge of starvation, and that God could appear to the hungry only in the shape of bread. Certain necessities of life are essential, but there is a limit to these. When we go beyond that limit and multiply our wants, we are losing sight of the ends and becoming slaves of the means. It is necessary to have a social order which will ensure the necessities of life ; but we should not become slaves of material objects even while we enjoy material things : we should enjoy them in a spirit of detachment. As is mentioned in the very first hymn of the *Ishopanishad*, we should seek enjoyment in renunciation : our enjoyment of material things should arise out of the very contemplation of our renunciation of them.

The social order in the world to-day is far different from this ideal, for its basis is material enjoyment. We, too, are being drawn towards that ideal. Gandhiji tried to revive the old ideal through the vows he prescribed. But we are anxious to secure the means and resources which would make life as enjoyable as it is to the people in the West. Whether we are engaged in a struggle for better wages as ordinary labourers or whether we endeavour to raise the standard of living in the country as a whole, the basic factors underlying both kinds of efforts are the same—our dependence upon external means and our feeling that all our miseries flow out of their absence, and our hope that we shall attain real happiness through them.

This is the reason why every man is preoccupied with securing the means of his own enjoyment. In doing so he does not care for the effect of his effort on others. Every individual, every society, every nation tries, in every possible way, to secure its own means of enjoyment regardless of the happiness or suffering of others,—by bribery or black-marketing, by causing suffering to, and exploitation of others, by direct theft or open loot. The strong man oppresses the weak, the strong country looks for means to establish its dominion over the weak one. We shall have to change our attitude and see to it that we do not need to depend on externals for our happiness, for the only true happiness can be found within That does not imply indifference to material things but conquest over them ; and that conquest will be gained not by means of one material object over another, but by self-discipline.

We read in religious and ancient books about the greatness and the divine qualities of *rishis*, *munis*, prophets, gods and incarnations, and learn from them how to make our lives sublime. A man makes his own life better and brighter to the extent he can adopt and practise in his own life the discipline which those books have prescribed. It is difficult to come across such great men in the flesh in this world. We have to learn from the written word how they lived, and mould our own lives accordingly. If a man, however, does actually come into contact with such a person, he cannot be more fortunate. Mahatma Gandhi was one such, and millions of men and women had the good fortune to see him and come in contact with him. Several times during the last thirty or thirty-two years he toured throughout the country, from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari and from Kohat to Kamakhya. Countless men met him and saw him ; but never once did he undertake a tour for amusement or for the purpose of seeing the country : all his tours were planned with a definite objective in view—to gain freedom for the country which was under alien rule, to breathe the breath of life into bodies that were all but lifeless, to create an urge and enforce it into enfeebled hearts, and to strengthen our moral fibre. He knew that he could achieve all those things only when the eyes of the people were

opened so that they could see things for themselves, become fearless, and come to a realisation of their own strength. He roused them, and made them fearless—made them know themselves.

It was in South Africa that he had invented his infallible weapon of Satyagraha. When he returned to India, he gave it to his people so that they could free themselves from the misery and dishonour in which they lived, and to rid themselves of laziness and their sense of dependence. But what, exactly does this Satyagraha signify ? It signifies insistence on truth—truth that must be observed in thought, word and deed. But if, in an attempt to observe truth, a man, by the compulsion of a threat, makes it difficult for another to observe it as he sees it, how can he be said to follow truth ? That is not following truth at all. A man may claim to observe it not only when he does so himself, but also when he helps others to do so ; in other words, when he does not become an impediment in the path of those who want to observe it as well. But that can be only when he observes it and expects others to do so, and never intends any kind of threat or force to others. If we feel hurt because something has been done to us, we must realise that others, too, would feel the same way if it is done to them. Anything which, we feel, would hurt us, is equally likely to hurt others as well ; and we should not, therefore, do it. That is the fundamental reality of non-violence ; and practice of truth becomes impossible without the observance of non-violence. That was why Gandhiji had made truth and non-violence the cardinal principles of his life, which was evident not only in his words but in every action of his : in these twin principles, he gave practical lessons to Indians and to mankind in general. If the observance of truth is impossible without non-violence, it follows that the two are inseparable. Gandhiji regarded both as one, and believed that non-violence embodied truth. God is truth—this is what people have believed in and said at all times. But Gandhiji thought there was only one way of knowing and realising God and that was by way of the pursuit of truth. He always insisted that there was no difference between means and ends. And he not only believed that God is truth but also that truth is God.

Great men simplify great principles and make them easily intelligible to ordinary men. Gandhiji, by insistence on this one simple thing, wanted to change the current of our whole life Man should have perfect freedom to observe truth and non-violence ; he cannot do so if he is under any kind of compulsion. Compulsion may take various forms, some of them created by man himself ; and he can, if he so desires, get rid of them by his own efforts. There are people, however, who not only submit to compulsion themselves, but who also exercise it on others. Sometimes there is such a thing as compulsion of events, which does not allow one any freedom of action, whether those events have been brought about by oneself or by others. Man has to win freedom from all kinds of compulsion. To the extent he succeeds in winning that freedom, to that extent only does he become capable of observing truth. But if he goes on multiplying his physical needs without setting a limit to them, he will go on tightening the bonds of compulsion. Therefore, to gain true freedom, we must necessarily cut down on our wants.

All the conflicts that take place or have even taken place, between individuals and groups, have been due to the fact that the wants of one man come in conflict with those of others. Since each cannot have what he wants, force is made use of in order to get what one wants, regardless of the fact that, in the process, one might deprive another of what he needs. For the observance of truth, therefore, non-acquisition becomes necessary. If a man realises that his own necessities are as essential for him as the necessities of others are for them, he would not only set himself free but others as well. On a deeper consideration of the matter, therefore, we shall come to the conclusion that the basic teachings of all religions are embodied in the observance of truth. Can a man be free if he deprives others of their freedom ? Can he be truly virtuous if he forces on others what he deems to be virtue ? Can he make truth possible in the life of others while his own is full of falsehood ? And can he live a life of truth if he is not fearless ? These are the things Gandhiji realised in his own life ; and these are the truths which every religion teaches.

He attempted to win for us individual, social and national freedom, and he showed us that there was really no difference between individual or social life and national life. Naturally, therefore, whatever is harmful or prohibited for an individual is equally so for society and for a nation. If in our personal life and for our own advancement we concede that a life of untruth is productive of harm, it follows then that no good can come to a society or to a nation by a resort to untruthful action. We consider it wrong to say one thing and do another in our personal life ; equally so should we consider it wrong to say one thing and do another in national affairs. Diplomacy would be productive of harm in national affairs, even as it is in personal. That was why Gandhiji declared that if we won Swaraj by giving up truth and non-violence, that Swaraj would not be worth having.

For this reason, truth and non-violence were accepted as the basic factor in all our activities. If our means were not pure, the ends would not be good. It is often said that if the end is good, we may adopt any means we like ; that if in attaining the end we have to adopt improper means, that would certainly be excusable even though it would be very undesirable. Gandhiji always held that wrong means were always wrong because they never led to the attainment of the objective, and that even if it seemed as if success had been achieved, that would not be the realisation of the objective because the adoption of the means itself would change the quality of the end. That was why he insisted that truth and non-violence must be observed on all occasions and at all times.

We cannot be free as long as we do not give freedom to others. That is why, in a country where people follow different religions, speak different languages and belong to different races and castes, it is the duty of each to allow freedom to others to follow their own religion, act on their own line of thought and speak their own language, and not force anyone to adopt his own. In other words, everyone should behave towards the others in such a way that each is free to follow his own religion and speak his own language. Com-

munal conflicts, even like personal quarrels, arise because of the use of force by one against the other. Gandhiji, therefore, insisted that everyone should look on all religions with equal respect, and that the individuals belonging to them should be accorded equal treatment. And he finally gave up his life for this purpose.

Let us, on this anniversary of his death, search our hearts, and ask ourselves : "Do we really love others ? Are our actions motivated by selfish ends or are we at any rate trying to see to it that we do not harm others ? Are we prepared to do openly whatever it is that we are doing ? In other words, is there anything in our actions we would be ashamed of if they were done in the light of day or which we would like to conceal because of the fear of some evil coming upon us ? Have we the country's good at heart or only our own selfish ends ? Are we ennobling our own life or degrading it ? Are we ready to be weighed in Gandhiji's scale of values ? Are we prepared to allow others to follow their own religion, or are we trying, secretly or openly, to compel them to act in accordance with our own wishes ?"

We can make our life purposeful only if we look deep into every corner of our heart to see if there is anything within us which is secretly working against the teachings of Gandhiji.

OUR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS*

A foreigner unfamiliar with Indian conditions would, if he were to travel across this country, see so much diversity that he might easily think that India, instead of being a single nation, is an aggregate of nations, each one of which is different from the other. He would see many physical diversities of a far-reaching character, such as are usually to be seen only in a continent. He would see the snow-clad Himalayas at one end of the country and as he moves south, he would see the plains watered by the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Brahmaputra, and then the green table-land lying

*From an address delivered at the inauguration of the All-India-Cultural Conference held at Delhi, on March 15, 1951.

between the Vindhya, Aravali, Satpura, Sahyadri and the Nilgiri mountains. If he were to travel from west to east, he would see similar diversities and varieties. He would experience all types of climate ; the extreme cold of the Himalayan regions, the scorching heat of the plains in summer, the record rainfall of 500 inches in the Assam hills and the dry, arid climate of Jaisalmer where not even four inches of rainfall is recorded during the year. There is no food crop which cannot be grown in India, nor is there any fruit which cannot be cultivated here. There is no mineral which is not found in India nor is there any plant or animal which is unknown in the forests of this country.

By studying the people of the different regions of India, one can see the effect that climate has on the physical features, intellect, manner of living and the diet of a people. Similarly, there are several important languages spoken in this country without taking into account the vast number of dialects. Also, people of every known faith live in India and just as the dialects of this country are too numerous to be counted, it is not easy to count the exact number of sects into which the main religons of this country are divided. Naturally, it would not be surprising if in view of these diversities, a perplexed foreigner exclaims that India is not one country but an aggregate of countries. and that it is not one nation but a collection of nations ; for, to a person who does not delve deep beneath the surface of things, the diversities alone will be perceptible. But a careful examination reveals, beneath all these deversities, a unity which threads all these diversities into one, in the same way in which a silk thread unites different kinds of beautiful gems into a single necklace of which not a single gem is separate : and each gem not only charms with its beauty, but adds to the beauty of the others. This is not a poetic fancy but a well-established truth. As a result of the confluence of the numerous independent fountains and currents which have maintained their separate existence for thousands of years, a single stream of Indian culture flows over the sub-continent. It is our desire and our effort that it may continue to flow in the same manner as it has done so far and that it

may make immortal those forces which have been able to withstand the ravages of time.

There is an eternal ethical current which has been flowing in our country, and which occasionally incarnates itself into living forms. It is our good fortune to have had in our midst a living human embodiment of this ethical faith—a person, who, by making us aware of that faith, infused new life into our lifeless bodies and put new cheer and courage into our dying hearts. The immortal principle he stood for is the principle of truth and ahimsa, which is vital not only for India but also for the continued existence of humanity.

We have already established a democratic form of government in this country which provides scope for the full development of the individual as well as that of the collective social group. There is usually a kind of opposition between the individual and society. The individual desires his own progress and prosperity and if it obstructs the progress of another individual, a conflict is bound to occur between the two unless, of course, this conflict is resolved by each one by following the path of individual progress through the method of non-violence.

Our culture is rooted in the principle of non-violence, for we attach the greatest importance to the principle of ahimsa. Another name or form of ahimsa is sacrifice, just as another name or form of violence is self-aggrandisement which often finds expression in self-indulgence. According to our philosophy, however, even self-gratification can be obtained through renunciation. Our people have found the highest joy and self-realisation through renunciation. The Sruti says "Enjoy that which has been given unto you by Him." It is by this principle that we wish to resolve the conflict between individuals, between the individual and the group, between the communities and between nation and nation. Our whole ethical consciousness is suffused by this principle. It is because of this faith that we let different ideological currents flow freely in their own channels, different creeds and faiths

grow and flourish without any restraint, and different languages develop and blossom to the fullest possible extent.

We assimilated people of different races into our own, absorbed their culture and permitted ours to mingle with that of the others and it was because of this that the links we established in other countries were forged with love and not with aggression. Never in our history did we use force to enslave other people to our power. If we won them, it was by winning their hearts and, therefore, traces of our influence are still to be found all over the world, even though we ourselves have, in many respects, forgotten that ethical consciousness which gave us this influence over other countries.

Today, the most important problem before us is to find out how far this historic ethical consciousness, which has been the main motive force of the life of our common people, can prove useful to us in the changed conditions of the present age. No one can deny that, in this connection, there are two currents of thought in our country. Some people are of the opinion that in the modern industrial age, an ethical consciousness which teaches man the lessons ot non-violence, truth and renunciation has no value. They believe that in the competitive economic system of today, ruthless self-aggrandisement is absolutely necessary. We have, how ever, to weigh carefully this aggressive egoism of the industrial age against the principles of humility and courtesy which are inherent in our ethical system and adopt one as the driving force and power in the revolutionary reconstruction of our country.

It would not be out of place to say that, in the West, the inevitable and unavoidable result of this aggressive egoism has been the emergence of the theory of class war on the one hand and, on the other, heartless political and economic exploitation, reinforced by imperialism. We have to decide whether cultural progress must inevitably be through the principle of 'might is right'or whether it can also be achieved on the basis of the moral awareness to which, centuries ago, the sages drew the attention of our people. It is no

doubt true that, though we may wish to, we cannot keep ourselves aloof from the progress that the West has made in the scientific sphere ; nor can we remain unaffected by its developments in the sphere of industry ; nor do I think that such an attempt is desirable or necessary. The only consideration that we have to keep in view is how we can harmonise science with our indigenous culture. I think, while considering the question, we have to remember that notwithstanding the many natural calamities and man-made evils which have afflicted our country from time to time, the creative urge of our people has not been destroyed or diminished. Empires rose and fell, different faiths flourished and declined and we suffered foreign aggression and oppression. Nature and man heaped numerous calamities upon us. Yet we were able to maintain our existence, preserve our culture, and retain our vital and creative powers. Even during the darkest days, we were able to produce such thinkers and men of action who would, by right, have occupied the highest place in any age in the history of the world. During the period of our political slavery, we were able to produce such a man of action, faith and revolutionary ideals as Gandhiji, such a talented poet as Rabindranath Tagore, and such great yogis as Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi. During the same period, we were also able to produce scholars and scientists to whom the world still pays homage.

Even amidst circumstances which had destroyed some of the famous civilisations of the world, we have not only been able to maintain our existence but have also preserved our intellectual and moral glory. It appears to me that the main reason for our survival is that our collective consciousness rests on an ethical foundation which is stronger, deeper and wider than the mountains, oceans and the sky. The collective consciousness of the nations which have perished was imprisoned in the cage of race and language. It may well be that this cage was of gold, but nevertheless, it was a cage which enfeebled the inmate, with the result that when the cage was broken or had to be changed, national consciousness had become altogether helpless, nay even lifeless. But our collective consciousness, or in other words our culture,

has never remained imprisoned within racial, regional or linguistic boundaries. As I have already said, these different aspec's of our life have been only different channels of its expression, and never have they been bonds which crushed and stifled it. On the other hand, the fabric of our culture is woven by the threads of humanity. It is no doubt true that we have not been able to make it permeate every aspect of our life. To a certain extent, our fall was also due to our failure to make it the light of our life. But all the same it is there and we have to give it its due importance. Another point which we ought to consider is that this culture is the very life of our nation. It is this culture alone which unites our cities and villages, different regions and religions, and different classes and castes, with one another. They might differ in all other aspects, but this is the only bond which unites them. It was the realisation of this truth by Bapu that led him to rely upon this ethical consciousness to bring the Indian masses, under the leadership of our intelligentsia, into the current of the revolution. The mass mind suddenly became active under the call of ahimsa, service and sacrifice, simply because these ideals had been dormant in it for innumerable centuries. The far-sightedness of Bapu lay in the fact that he made the conciousness vibrating in the heart of the common people the main driving force of our revolution : in this also lay his success. Even when a section of the masses had become maddened by communal passions, Bapu was able to control them in Bihar and Delhi by appealing to this ethical consciousness.

It is for you to consider whether this ethical consciousness needs to be modified to suit the modern dynamic age. But, as far as I can see, it is basically in harmony with the needs of the modern age. The modern industrial civilisation cannot be confined within regional, racial or linguistic boundaries, for they are obstacles in its further development. It can rest only on a universal foundation. In my opinion, the conflict that we find in the West today is mainly due to the insistence of the people, under the influence of their out-moded social psychology, on maintaining these divisions.

The fact that our culture never gave much importance to such boundaries becomes significant in this connection. I feel, therefore, that if we have to escape the repetition of the injustices and atrocities which produce the conflicts of modern times, it is necessary for us to build our economic system on the foundation of the historic ethical consciousness of our country, and to make selflessness and social welfare the main driving force of our economy, rather than personal profit or self-gratification.

7

SARDAR PATEL

[Widely known as Sardar Patel, Vallabhbhai J. Patel (1875-1950) is rightly regarded as an indomitable freedom fighter and a dedicated servant of the nation. Like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad, he left his lucrative legal practice and joined freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi. He organised relief works for the victims of plague in Gujarat in 1917 and led the massive struggle of the peasants of Kaira district who had lost their standing crops due to heavy rains in the beginning of 1918 and so could not pay taxes. In 1923 Maulana Shaukat Ali called Patel 'a volcano covered with ice.' His success in the Bardoli satyagraha was a romantic saga of his political career. The peasants complained to him about the revision of revenue which had a steep increase of 22 per cent. He took up their cause with firmness and sincerity and exhorted them not to pay taxes at the revised rate until the official increase was withdrawn. Consequently, under his leadership Bardoli became a sign and a symbol of hope and strength and victory of the Indian peasants. In 1931 he presided over the session of the Congress held at Karachi. In the 1930s, he was dubbed as a prominent figure of the right-wing of the Indian National Congress on account of his opposition to the radical steps preferred by certain 'progressive' members of the Congress. After 1940 his attack on the communal politics of the Muslim League became so sharp and outspoken that his Muslim critics misconstrued his stand for the cause of undivided India. Since he was a realist and an iron man of action, he accepted the proposal of country's partition in 1947 as the only possible remedy to save the body from infection after amputating its diseased and incurable

limb. It shows that though a Gandhian, Patel appreciated Gandhiji's way of non-violence as a policy and not as an immutable philosophy of life. In her tribute paid to the late Sardar, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu hailed him as "an iron casket that holds rare and hidden gems of devotion, sweetness and charm." Nehru called Patel the "tower of strength on whose advice the people could confidently rely."]

THE CREED OF NON-VIOLENCE*

Hakim Saheb, Brother delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Never before has the Congress met under auspices such as God has provided for this year. We seem to be pulsating with joy when we might have been grieving over the separation of our loved and severed workers. I shall not call them leaders ; for the year that is about to close on us has taught us that leadership consists in service. And if we recognise that great and learned Musalmans and Hindus are now having their well-earned rest in the Government jails, we do so because they have served and suffered for us and earned the reward coveted by us and reserved by a Government which pretends to be based on principles of law and order but which is really based on force as is becoming clear day by.

We had hoped that we could meet to celebrate the establishment of Swaraj and therefore endeavoured to arrange the reception befitting such an occassion. But though we do not meet to celebrate that happy event. God in his abundant mercy has sent us suffering to try us and make us worthy of so precious a gift. And therefore, viewing the imprisonments, assaults, forcible searches, breaking open of our offices and schools, as a certain sign of the approaching Swaraj as a balm for the wounds inflicted upon our Mussalman brothers and Punjabees, we have not in any way altered or toned down our decorations, musical programme and other events, betokening noy and arranged for your reception.

*Welcome address delivered by Sardar Patel at the Ahmedabad Congress on 27 December, 1921.

But we do not ask you to judge our fitness for the honour of having you in our midst by the adequacy of our arrangements for your comforts and entertainment. I am fully conscious of our defects and the Reception Committee relies upon your generously overlooking them.

But the test you imposed upon us and we gladly accepted was our response to the Creative Programme of non-cooperation with its life-giving and central fact of non-violence. Our dissociation from the institutions of a Government, which seeks its safety by organising violence in the place of organising free public opinion and giving effect to it, meant our abstention under every circumstance from violence. I can truthfully claim that we have endeavoured to be non-violent in thought, word and deed. We have made a serious, and definite effort to purify ourselves by conquering the weak flesh in us.

Hindu-Muslim unity is its most visible symbol. Whereas hitherto, we have distrusted and considered ourselves as natural enemies, we have begun to love each other and live in perfect friendliness. I am proud to be able to inform you that the relations between us have been and are not merely negatively friendly but we have been actively working together for the advancement of the national cause. Similarly we have cultivated sweet relations with our Parsi, Christian and other countrymen. Whilst we have vigorously prosecuted our programme. We have endeavoured to retain friendly relations with those who have differed from us. We have recognised that toleration is the essence of non-violence.

As to the renunciation of titles and practice by lawyers, we can, I am sorry to say, show nothing of which we can feel proud. The Boycott of Councils was certainly extensive so far as voters were concerned. We have a creditable record about education. Some of the best schools and high schools have given up their connection with the Government and are none the worse for it. Attendance in most of the big national schools is on the increase. We have a National College and a National University to which institutions are affiliated. In the affiliated and other national schools there are 31,000 boys and girls receiving instruction.

Whereas two years ago there was hardly a spinning-wheel working in our province, today there are at least 1,000 spinning-wheels at work. The output of Khaddar during the period under review is no less than two lacs of pounds. We have spent about 5 lacs in organising *Swadeshi*. The use of khaddar in construction of the various *pandals* and Khadi Nagar is, in my opinion, a striking ocular demonstration of our work in the direction of swadeshi.

In temperance we have resorted to picketing on an extensive scale with encouraging results We have heen most careful in the choice of pickets. They have done their work under trying circumstances and some of them have received injuries at the hands of the enraged drinkers and sellers.

We have perhaps made the greatest advance in the matter of untouchability. Our suppressed countrymen freely attend our meetings. The national schools are open to them in theory for which the Senate had to fight for a tough battle. In practice, however there is not yet the insistent canvass to bring the children of these countrymen to our schools and make them feel that they are in no way inferior to our own.

Though, therefore, our goal is not to multiply separate schools for such children we shall be compelled to maintain such schools for such children for some time to come. But the removal of the curse is not to be gauged by the number of schools opened for them or even their attendance in ordinary national schools. Untouchability is an attitude, and I am glad to be able to note that whilst we have yet to work much in this direction, it has undergone a most noticeable change.

But I know that we have not passed through the fire of suffering that Bengal, Punjab, United Provinces and the other provinces are passing through. I am hoping that our non-violence, to which I have proudly referred, is not non-violence due to helplessness but is due to self-imposed restraint. The Government has provided for us an opportunity by taking forcible possession of national schools from the Municipalities of Nadiad and Surat. Ahmedabad has the same problem to

solve, and it can only be solved by Civil Disobedience in the last resort. The Tehsils of Bardoli and Anand are making elaborate preparations for Mass Civil Disobedience. I bespeak the prayers of this great Assembly that God may give us the strength to go through the ordeal of suffering and enable us to stand shoulder to shoulder with other sister Provinces. At the same time I wish to assure you that we shall do nothing reckless, nothing that we, as peaceful and peace-loving human beings, may not do for the preservation of the national self-respect or safeguarding of national rights.

I now ask Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib to take the chair as Acting President. Though Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das is not in our midst in the body, his pure, patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit is with us.

In the circumstances created for us by the Bengal Government, the All-India Congress Committee has followed the example of our brethren of the Muslim League when in the absence of Moulana Mohammad Ali, their President, they had to elect an acting President. I know that in Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib, whom the All-India Congress Committee has elected to act in Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das's place, we have one of the greatest and noblest of our countrymen. For Hakimji is an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. He commands the confidence and the affection of Hindus and others equally with our Mussalman brothers.

GUJARAT MAHARASHTRA CONFEDERATION*

I feel completely at home among you, and am tempted to pour out my heart before you. We have passed some resolutions of a condemnatory character. Sometimes this condemnation is I know necessary, but I believe neither in condemnation nor requests. A system which is condemned day in and day out gets hardened and dead to all sense of shame and begins condemning those who condemn it. I believe in resolutions which are the expression of our strength

* From *Young India*, 9 May, 1929.

and which lay down a programme calculated to add to our strength. It is such resolutions that Government will care to have specially telegraphed to them. Other resolutions they will not have even the time to read. For whatever may be the shortcomings of our bureaucracy, they are acute enough to gauge our strength.

I am positive that a slow, if imperceptible, transformation is coming over Maharashtra. Think of the attitude of Maharashtra on the question of untouchability seven years ago, and compare it with what it is today. The speeches on that resolution revealed a breadth of vision and determination that was never so evident as it is today. I know Maharashtra has its misgivings about the methods of non-violence. But I ask you, is the present an age of the sword ? We may take the name of Shivaji, but do you think we are in a position today to adopt the means that he adopted ? God gave us a Shivaji when we needed a Shivaji, and a Lokamanya when we needed a Lokamanya. Today we are in need of a *Bania* leader to give battle to the 'nation of shopkeepers,' and God has given us one in Mahatma Gandhi of Gujarat. Who does not know the sacrifice, the learning, the culture of Maharashtra ? Let us combine it today with the business sense of Gujarat. Maharashtra is lying supine today. The moment Maharashtra shakes off its torpor and begins moving India will also begin advancing....

You laugh at the advice of Gandhi, saying it is the impracticable advice of a saint. I am not a saint, I have taken no step in my life without cool calculation and deliberation, and I know that a day is coming when the world will recognise what that thin wisp of a man said was the right thing to do. If the speaker would listen to me, I would ask him no more to plough the sands in Delhi and Simla. For what else is he doing ? He assiduously studies Parliamentary procedure, prepares a learned ruling of ten typed sheets and delivers it to the Assembly, only to know that the very next day the Viceroy comes and turns it to naught. The President next will address himself to checkmate the Viceroy in his new move, and the latter will again come down with something else. I for one do not like this futile

game. Why not come back to Gujarat, I am telling him, and we might give this obstinate Government a thorough shaking... What was done in Gujarat can be done in Maharashtra, provided there is a suitable atmosphere. But you today talk of the liberty of the individual to adopt any course he likes. A man has certainly the right to throw a bomb and go to the gallows, but how is he going to help a non-violent movement seriously conducted ? I tell you, in an experiment of that character, no man may flinch from the instructions given to him. A single peasant might spoil the whole battle by offering violent resistance to a policeman attaching his buffalo. And why do you talk of the cult of the bomb and the cult of non-violence ? There can be no cult of the bomb. There is a cult of violence as opposed to the cult of non-violence, but both need organisation. The bomb had never a *milieu* in India. Look at the sad history of the bomb in India. How many turned approvers, how many were turned out of their homes, how many led desperate futile lives ? You can never have an atmosphere of the bomb. Nor can you have an atmosphere of violence, for no organisation is possible in an unarmed country like ours.... If any organisation is possible it is for a peaceful revolution. Create the atmosphere for it in Maharashtra and I will stand shoulder to shoulder with you. But Maharashtra is torn with dissensions and factions. A futile controversy is raging over the holding of a Marathi Literary Conference in Belgaum ! Forget all these squabbles and engage in stead in serious work. Fortunately for you, you have no cities in Maharashtra and no mills. Coming from the city of mills I might talk about them, but why you talk of mills and mill-cloth I do not understand. All that you need think about is how to make a peasant earn four rupees monthly instead of two.... The conditions in Maharashtra are not dissimilar from those in Gujarat. Only you need a peaceful atmosphere where there is no dissentient voice. Your peace will paralyse the whole police and military force. We did so in Bardoli and I challenged Government to provoke us as much as they could. They failed. I appeal to Maharashtra to make up its mind, purge itself of dissensions, create the suitable atmosphere and prepare itself to fight the good fight. My humble service is at its disposal.

GANDHIJI'S NOTE OF APPRECIATION*

Sardar Vallabhbhai is the one man who has been responsible for keeping the peace in Gujarat, during these troublous times. He is the man whose unique administration of the Ahmedabad Municipal Board drew unstinted praise from the Government. He is the man whose tireless energy put heart into the flood-stricken people of Gujarat in 1927 and when the Government machinery had broken down, his workers were responsible for saving the lives of thousands of people. It was Vallabhbhai Patel who waged a peaceful war in Bardoli the other day resulting in a settlement honourable to both the parties. This man of peace, this idol of the Gujaratis, their uncrowned king is now a prisoner for disregarding a notice prohibiting speech when there was not even the remotest danger of breach of the peace. He had not gone, the authorities knew, for disobeying the provisions of the Salt Act. He had gone simply to prepare for my march. He had to be removed somehow or other. The Viceroy is sorry for my contemplated breach of the law. What is to be said of this act of corrupting and abusing the law, interfering with a man's liberty in the name of the law ?

And where is Sardar living and how ? He is in a common cell, unable to sleep in the open and without any light. He is given food which may induce dysentery to which he is prone. He may not receive any but religious books. As a Satyagrahi, he wants no special treatment. But why should the commonest felon be prevented, if he is no danger to safety, from sleeping under the sky in this hot weather ? Why should a felon not be given light to read or write if he needs it ? May not a murderer read and instruct himself ? And why should Sardar Vallabhbhai not have food that his health demands ? But this is a matter of prison reform. Sardar Vallabhbhai is not the man whose spirit will be broken, if he does not get the necessary creature comforts. Did not the learned journalist and dramatic author Sjt. Khadilkar have similar treatment

*From *Young India*, 12 March 1930.

only the other day? The spirit of Satyagraha will not be broken by shabby treatment in the Indian prisons. Only let those who have faith in the proposed conference know what Dominion Status in action really means.

Gujarat, nay India, is preparing to vindicate the authority of the supreme law which will supersede the utter lawlessness masquerading under the name of law. The authorities have imprisoned Vallabhbhai in the hope that his work will languish. Before long they will realise that his work will continue as if he were bodily in the midst of his people.

THE SARDAR IN JAIL*

I had the honour in company with Prof. Kripalani to have the *darshan* of the Sardar in jail. His first word and his last was that he was never happier in his life than at the present moment. 'But you should not have deceived Bapu like that', said Professor Kripalani. 'What was I to do?' said the Sardar with a merry laugh, 'they deceived me. If they had told me that they were going to send me to jail I should not have gone to Borsad.'

'But joking apart let us know how you are being treated.'
'Just like an ordinary criminal. I am perfectly happy.'
'Don't the new Jail Rules apply to you?

'The Superintendent knows nothing about the new rules, and they refused to give me a copy of the Jail manual.'

'But let us know something about your appointments and your associates.'

'Well I am in a cell which is locked up for the night at about 5-30 P.M. on week days and 3-30 P.M. on Sundays. I was afraid I might not have sleep on the first day, but then there has been no difficulty. I have been sleeping like a log. But I do wish they allowed us to sleep outside in this hot

*Version of Mahadev Desai in *Young India*, 12 March 1930.

weather. I think our friends who were here in 1922 were all allowed to sleep outside.'

'And food ?'

'As good or bad as one can expect to get in jail. Don't bother about food. I assure you I can live on air for three months,' he said, again bursting into a loud laugh.

But we pressed him for details. *Jowari* gruel was given in the morning, but he did not take it for fear of getting dysentery, and then *Jowari roti* and *dhal* or *roti* and vegetable every alternate day. 'The gram *roti* is good enough for a horse,' he added. He was suffering from aching teeth and I asked him how he managed to chew the *Jowari* bread. 'Oh, I break it up in water and get along splendidly. I tell you, you need not worry yourself about my food.'

'And do you have a bed to sleep on, or a light ?'

'Neither. They have given me a blanket, and Bhagvad Gita and Tulsi Ramayana. If I was given a light I should be able to read at night which is impossible at present.'

'You want anything else to read ?'

"*Ashram bhajanavali* (hymn book) is all that I want. The three should suffice for the brief period of three months.'

'And your associates ?

'Ordinary felons. Ours is called the juvenile ward, though there are in it older people than myself. They are from all parts of the country and have come in for all sorts of crimes. Our three friends from Jalalpur, sentenced for picketing, were for a day with me, but they were removed.' Dangerous because familiar company, I suppose !

I then had a talk about the circumstances of his conviction and sentence the legal or illegal aspect of which (though not on the face of it) seems to have worried some of the members of the local bar. I told him that he might be interviewed any day by some one of the Vakils from Ahmedabad who contemplated to move the High Court as *amicus curiae*. 'Why do you bother it ? he said. 'I am quite happy here and should

regret to be released earlier. As for the conviction I am quite sure that it was wrong. The Magistrate was too dense to understand the law. He did not know under what section he was to convict me. He took about an hour and a half to write a judgment of eight lines,'

'But did he mention the section ?'

Here the jailor read out the history ticket of Prisoner Vallabhbhai Patel which showed that he was convicted under Sec. 71 of the Bombay District Police Act for not complying with orders under Section 54 of the same Act.

The Sardar said : "Yes it was Section 71. But I had been asked under the order not to make a speech which was calculated to do this thing or that thing. I made no speech at all. I said I was going to disobey the order and they arrested me. said, 'All right,' and when the Magistrate read out to me the proceedings I said, "Why do you worry ? I plead guilty. You may convict me as you like.' When he convicted me, however, he had not the courtesy to read out the judgment but simply said he was giving me the maximum sentence under the law He saw me handing over cash and papers to Sjt. Mohanlal Pandya, and asked me what amount it was, so that he might recover part of the fine. He had not even the decency of not casting his eyes on a few rupees when the amount of fine was Rs. 500. But I told him that it was public money and that he had better be careful."

He gave me a list of things that he wanted including a soap and his shaving tackle. 'No razor allowed,' said the Superintendent, 'but we shall allow you a shave.'

'What kind of a shave you will give me,' said Vallabhbhai.

But here the jailor interrupted the Superintendent with evidently better knowledge of jail rules. He said : 'In this case, Sir, razor might be allowed, provided he does not keep it with himself. We shall give it to him, when he wants.'

"Quite all right,' said Vallabhbhai. 'But why not give me a razor and allow me to shave the others ? There will be some

work to my credit.' And even the little parts of that inhuman machinery called the jail department could not help creaking with laughter. But they are jealous of their inhumanity, and soon repair the mistake if even they blunder into humanity. So the jailor added: 'You may have your soap, but it should not be scented soap!' And again the jail gate rang with laughter.

As we were leaving, the Sardar said: 'Don't worry about me. I am as happy as a bird. There is only one thing over which I am rather unhappy.' And he was silent for a moment. The Jail Superintendent and the Jailor looked curiously at each other. We also wondered what it might be. It can't be said,' said the Sardar still tantalizing us. But we insisted.

'Well,' said the Sardar, 'one thing and one alone worries me, and that is that all the people in charge of the jail are Indians. It is through us Indians that they work this inhuman system. I wish they were all foreigners, so that I might fight them. But how could I fight our own kith and kin?'

'I hope the friends saw the point of the joke. As I was leaving I was rather worried that this was to be the first and the last interview that the Sardar would have, as he could have only one interview in three months.

'Oh no,' he said reassuring us, and even administering a loving rebuke, 'don't worry about the interviews. I don't want any one to interview me. That will only serve to remind me that the man interviewing me is still out of jail.'

Let the country appreciate the joke contained in these parting words of Sardar.

HOW SARDAR WAS IMPRISONED*

Ever since the question of Civil Disobedience has been on the tapis, there have been long discussions over the ways and means of it. What surprised every one was the attitude of studied unconcern of Sardar Vallabhbhai about all this talk. He hardly attended any of the numerous informal meeting we had in Gandhiji's room. 'How am I interested in them? he

*Version of Mahadev Desai in *Young India*, 12 March, 1930.

would say in his queer way. 'Do as he wants you to do. Let him go to jail and then I shall give you my programme, but no discussion until he is out. I believe in literally carrying out his programme.' And he maintained this position until the last. Just a day before his imprisonment, at Gandhiji's instance he had to participate in the discussion as to the best ground for the operations of the first batch of volunteers. He was strongly for Surat, and as soon as it was decided, he set out for Borsad, not to disobey the Salt Act, but to prepare the people for a fitting reception of Gandhiji and his valiant band when they would pass through the district. He started a few hours earlier than he need have for the meetings arranged for him, conferred with the workers and fixed the stages of the march through the Kheda district and sent the programme by a special messenger. He first sent me a line to say, that the Salt Collector had issued a notification, which meant that Government had taken up the challenge, and that the District Magistrate and parties of policemen had marched to Borsad where he was to go. He did smell something in the dispositions and said : 'Well, Government is making the way easy for us.'

And indeed the way had been made easy for him. Before he and his party reached the place of the meeting, they halted for the mid-day meal at a place called Ras where there was to be *no* meeting. But just as they were preparing to leave after the meal, the people had gathered in large numbers and insisted on hearing something from the Sardar's lips. The Sardar, though he acceded to their request was not going to make a speech, except to tell them that they might go to the other place where the meeting was to take place. But just as he was preparing to speak he was served with a notice not to address the meeting under a Section of the District Police Act. He said he would prefer to disobey the notice. 'Then,' said the Magistrate, 'I arrest you.' There had been no speech, no overt disobedience ; but there it was, he was arrested. Whilst this was happening, a regular police parade was going on before the Sardar's eyes. 'It is a shame both for Government and for us that such a display should be necessary for the arrest of a man like myself,' said the Sardar. I should have

obeyed their summons without their putting themselves to such trouble.'

As soon as he was arrested, the Sardar took leave of the people with these words :

"I hope that you will hail with rejoicings the honour that has fallen to my lot of being the first to go to jail on the eve of this campaign, and that Gujarat will fulfil what the Congress and Gandhiji have expected of it.

"Let not Gujarat forget that the time has now arrived for repaying what Gandhiji has done for it by his sustained and strenuous penance of fifteen years on the banks of the Sabarmati. If Government have a particle of sense in them, they will not lay their hands on a saintly person like him.

"It is our duty to obey his command so long as he is left free. But when he also is arrested you will do what I have told you in my Broach speech.

"Our victory depends entirely on our capacity for suffering and sacrifice. The progress of our work will be commensurate with the speed with which we sever all connection with this Government.

"It is my prayer that God may make Gujarat capable of that achievement."

The story of the trial and the sentence is briefly told. In a few minutes he was taken to Borsad, the taluka headquarters, where the District Magistrate had been waiting to receive the honoured accused. Some years ago the same Magistrate had, as Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad, often taken his orders from the Sardar. The Magistrate and the accused shook hands. What little time elapsed was taken up by the preliminaries under the Criminal Procedure Code. The Sardar set an example to all who were to follow him by making no statement. He only said : 'I plead guilty.'

As they were taking him away he entrusted whatever cash and papers he held in his pocket to Sjt. Mohanlal Pandya. The Magistrate who had sentenced him to simple imprisonment for three months and to a fine of Rs. 500 and three weeks imprisonment in default cast wistful eyes on the cash. 'How much is it ?' he inquired. 'Something over Rs. 25,' said Sjt. Pandya. 'I should like to appropriate it in part payment of his fine,' said the Magistrate.

'No,' said the Sardar. 'You may not do so. It is public money.'

"How am I to know it ?' asked the Magistrate.

'You must take me at my word,' replied the Sardar, and the Magistrate gladly did so.

The car was ready to take him to the Sabarmati Prison, as ready as the Magistrate who served the notice and the District Magistrate who tried the Sardar.

The journey to Sabarmati takes about four hours. We had just finished our prayers when we heard that the Sardar was about to pass the Ashram on his way to the jail. We stood all in two rows to greet the Sardar. The police who escorted him were human enough to stop the car for a minute or two. As soon as the Sardar saw Gandhiji, he burst into a loud laugh which filled the air. There was no rush to see the Sardar, no cry of exultation. Every one knew that it was the Sardar's laugh, and that was enough for them. A sister was ready with a yarn garland and *kumkum* with which she marked the victor's forehead. As the car moved away, the, Sardar smiled at the familiar faces and said : 'Follow me, I am keeping room ready for you.'

SARDAR'S MESSAGE*

I must first of all express my heartfelt thanks to you all for the cordial welcome you have given me on my release from the Sabarmati Jail.

*From *Times of India*, 3 July 1930, (English version of Sardar 'Patel's message delivered in 'Gujarati' on the Sabarmati sands).

You might not, of course, expect any advice or suggestion from me regarding our campaign just at the present moment. For, I was sent to jail even before our war began. I was able to gather very little information about the development and progress of our way during my term of imprisonment. But now I feel proud to see your enthusiasm and your zeal unabated even when all our leaders are in jail and when Mahatmaji, our Commander-in-Chief, has been arrested and interned for an indefinite time at Yervada. My heartiest congratulations to you on your high spirits. I congratulate you also on the unprecedented peace you have observed and on the unshakable courage you have shown till now. Again your skill as well as your sacrifice also deserve to be complimented.

More than this, perhaps, you may not expect from me at the present juncture. I want first of all to see how the campaign is progressing in our Gujarat. The leaders are everywhere 'Freshmen'; I must meet them and make their acquaintance and study their method of fight as also learn of the difficulties they are facing. In short, I can only give guidance and lead after I am well conversant with the situation in Gujarat regarding the present war of Independence.

But you might have surely hoped to hear from me something about the story of jail life. What shall I say about it? Heads were not broken there. There were no hardships at all in jail. Do not believe any one who may say that there is unhappiness in jail life. You can feel extremely happy there and that too by living on four pice a day. Outside the jail you cannot feel so happy as you do inside even if you live there on four pice a day. For, enjoying nice dishes with great relish while remaining outside the prison walls at present is in fact like filling one's belly with worthless stuff like dust, and sleeping on a heap of soft mattresses is like lying down on a funeral pyre, when the President of the Indian Congress, the chosen head of the people, is confined behind prison walls and when Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest man on earth, is kept in Yervada prison cells. It is nothing but truth, therefore, when I say that one feels more happy at times like the present inside the jail

than outside. I was awarded free boarding and lodging, as it were, for three months and three weeks for being charged with disregarding a notice issued by a District Magistrate prohibiting a speech. And I have not missed any meals during my term of imprisonment excepting, unfortunately, the two loaves that I should have been given today. On being released a day earlier I complained to the Jailor of being robbed of my right of the two loaves and a little soup of *Juwar* that I should have got to-morrow morning. Otherwise, I was quite happy there.

All our friends who are now in Sabarmati Jail are alright. You can hardly imagine the intensity of pain I felt while taking leave of them. They also felt very much, I am sure, while bidding me good-bye.

You must not, then, entertain any fears in your mind about life in Jail. The Government is at present raging with anger ; it feels as if terribly hot. This is a sure sign that in a short time it will have to rage itself out and 'melt' at last, just as the heat we feel at this hour is an indication of rain to fall in torrents in short while.

I had foreseen so many things about the development of our war, but had seldom thought that *lathis* would be used by the Government officials. That the Government would undoubtedly shower bullets on innocent and harmed and perfectly non-violent crowds did not escape by imagination. But they have broken the heads of Satyagrahis. This is novel to me. But why wonder about the use of *lathis* ? The present Government is surely considered to be civilised : and would not a 'civilised' Government make a show of its civilisation in many new and varying ways ?

Our fight has only just begun. We have still to travese a long way to victory. Why then fear arrest or imprisonment ? Did I not tell you just now that one would not and could not be as happy outside the prison as inside it ?

Looking at the present as I do, the future appears to me to be full of hope. Your enthusiasm drives me to ecstacies of

delight. Now it is for you to demonstrate that the present enthusiasm is not simply momentary, it is not like a tide that ebbs after a while. But it is the fruit of harshest penance of that most powerful Saint of Sabarmati for a period of over twelve years. Many advised me today just after my release that I should not make any speech to you lest I should be "caught" thereby. There were some who could not even approve of my coming to your meeting for they feared I would again be arrested today. But I dare say none can read on my palm any sign indicative of jail ever coming to my lot, though have already been to jail and I am never afraid of life in jail. Why should prison-houses terrify us when the real prison is the fetter of *maya* ? Our soul is fettered with the chains of infatuation and illusion, desire and anger and that is the prison we should fear. No empire on earth, however mighty, could keep in bondage one who had of one's own accord broken the fetters of *maya*. It is for this reason that I have never feared and will never fear arrest or imprisonment.

I saw to-day while stepping out of the so-called prison 19 brave youths and a sister from Kheda District entering the jail. That sister is a Brahmin woman living in a small village. Her brother has been doing constructive work with me for the last 15 years. Thrice was he arrested and thrice have I brought him out of the prison. He is at present also in jail. I have asked my friends in jail to keep a room reserved for me, for either I shall bring them all out or shall also go there and sit with them. The sister who is just today imprisoned is illiterate. Her brother is well-known through the length and breadth of Gujarat for his purity of character and saintliness. For he has immensely influenced the lives of many a hundred in Gujarat. He is now in Nasik jail. His name is Ravishankar. I was never so glad and happy in my life as when I saw his sister, Chanchalbehn, entering the prison. When women from villages of Gujarat are prepared to fill up jails, our victory is, believe me, sure at hand. The part that our sisters play to-day in making history in Gujarat simply fills my heart with ineffable joy.

May the wave of enthusiasm and service of the Motherland that is sweeping over the country to-day surge ever and ever

increasingly ? Our life would be worth nothing if we could not vindicate the honour of our country by bringing triumphantly our great Generalissimo out of the prison cells at Yervada and thus give a right reply to the insult that has been hurled at us by his imprisonment.

Death visits us only once, never twice ; and it does not make any distinction between a millionaire and a pauper. Why, then, should we be afraid of it ? Let us all cast aside once for all these false fears of death.

There is no Government on earth I dare say, that can, merely by threatening with military and machine-guns, suppress a great nation of 330 millions against its own will. Our victory is, therefore, as sure and immediate, believe me, as our iron will and strong determination to win Independence.

I shall not, sisters and brothers, now detain you any longer. I rather feel a bit tired too. I thank you once more for your courtsey and kindness to me.

I shall be able to indicate some way in a short time after I am well aware of the situation in Gujarat. But what new way is now to be shown ? The Congress and the Mahatma have already shown us the way. And one needs only Truth and Non-violence to march that way. It is a royal road that can be traversed equally by young and old, by men and women. It is singularly characteristic of our religious war of Independence that even children can fight it out. The name of one, who will hide one's head from the battle and will not take one's proper place in the ranks, will be written in black capitals in history. Let us all, then, realise our duty in action, carry on fighting, courageously and without swerving till victory be ours. May God grant us enough strength and lead to us our ultimate goal.

In the statement promulgating the Ordinance against pickteing, the Viceroy said that his Government 'were anxious to see the promotion of indigenous industries.' The trouble with the bureaucracy has been the divergence between its intention and

its actions. The publications of the leaflet reproduced below recalls to us once again the hidden and cloaked spirit behind the bureaucracy—a spirit of exploration of India. The leaflet, we understand, has been withdrawn. Under the circumstances we feel an apology is due to the commercial community for this unwarranted affront to them. The mentality of the member of the bureaucracy which gave rise directly to issuing of such leaflet has to be got rid off and should be replaced by a genuine solicitude for the development of the country. This can only be done under complete Independence when we can ourselves control our destinies.

AZAD TO PATEL ON ISSUE OF CONGRESS PRESIDENTSHIP

Calcutta,
28 October 1938.

My Dear Sardar Patel,

Thank you for your letter of 23.10.38. I fully agree with you that the Parliamentary Sub-Committee should not interfere at all under the present circumstances, in the U.P. Tenancy Bill. In statements of Raja M. Dyal Seth, and Raja of Jahangirabad, together with the proceedings of Unnao and Sitapore conferences are extremely deplorable. There seems to be no reason for our arbitration, unless the zamindars decide something unanimously.

It is gratifying to learn that you also hold the same opinion, as I have already written this very thing to Pantji. He is so much certain of the settlement of this matter, that he is asking me the date of my arrival in Lucknow.

The effects of the canvassing of the President is also felt here. Several persons have complained of this to me during the last four days. Profulla Babu had also come. But what can I do in this matter ? The most interesting statement is that of Prof. Humayun Kabir and his companions. This appeared in the papers in the morning, and they came to me in the evening. They said that they were very sorry on learning that

I have absolutely refused to accept the Presidentship for the next year, and owing to my refusal it is feared that Sardar Patel would become the President. Therefore they were forced to accept the proposal of Subhas Babu's party that he should be elected again.

When I told them that their information was quite unfounded ; that no question of Presidentship has yet come before us till now, neither have I said anything about its acceptance or refusal, they were very much surprised.

They told me that they were informed of the above fact in Delhi with the fullest confidence in its truth. It was told to them, that the question of the next President had not come up before the Working Committee, and they thought of me about it, but I refused. They said that on account of my refusal it was feared that the name of Sardar Patel will be proposed. But as you were considered to be anti-Socialist and anti-extremist, and that you do not hold strong views against the Federation, moreover you were considered to be against Hindu-Muslim unity, it was necessary to propose the name of Subhas Babu to save the Congress of all these dangers.

These men *i.e* Humayun Kabir and his companions are not Congressmen, but they run about for the Ministry and the Government jobs. They will do whatever is required of them easily. They are ready to contradict their statement even now but I stopped them from making themselves a laughing stock by such actions.

Regarding Assam, we should forget the past, and henceforward try to handle the situation as best as we can. Mahatmaji, while in Delhi, had wished me to go and decide the matter after making an inquiry. It was resented by Subhas. I also thought that it will not be proper. I had decided to go on with the existing conditions as there was no other alternative. I therefore left the matter to Subhas Babu, with the idea that nothing more is to be done. Hence you may also consider the matter as closed.

Mr. Bardolai and Dr. Roy had talked to me on the phone as soon as I had reached Calcutta about the selection of Muslim

Ministers. I had given them necessary directions. You might have read in the papers about their selection of Mr. Bardolai might have written to you. So far as Sindh is concerned, it would be better if you force the Ministers to accept the decision of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. If they fear that the Assessment Scheme will thus be frustrated for ever, you may assure them that it is certainly not our objective. We only wish to do a thing in a proper way. Personally, I may assure you, that if the Ministry postpones the whole question for one year, I should like to enter into the spirit of the question and to work it out to its logical conclusion. It is certainly not the Congress programme that we cannot increase the rate of assessment, whatever the circumstances be. But it is necessary that we should do everything properly. We could do no more than we have done at Wardha, under the present circumstances. We have not decided, even in the case of non-acceptance of Ministry, that the Congress party will support the no-confidence motion : although it was the logical conclusion of our decision. We have, however, decided to remain neutral. If even 10 or 11 Muslim members support the Ministry, it reaches a total of 26.

I have sent you two letters this week, and am expecting replies to them.

I hope Maniben is quite well. Give her my *salams*.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. AZAD

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Patel to C. Rajagopalchari

Chairman,
All-India Parliamentary,
Sub-Committee,
Purshottam Mansion,
Bombay.
17 September, 1939

I am addressing you in regard to the war situation that has arisen and which affects India and your Government vitally.

Many of the Congress Ministers have been asking as to what their attitude should be in dealing with this situation. It is obvious that difficult and delicate problems are arising and will arise from day to day and it is highly desirable that a uniform policy, in consonance with Congress principles, should be followed by all the Congress Provincial Governments. Some of these problems were considered at the Prime Ministers' Conference held in Poona last month and a general agreement was arrived at in regard to the policy to be pursued. Those decisions and directions have to be borne in mind and followed now.

The policy of the Congress Government must necessarily be governed by the general Congress policy at this juncture. The Working Committee has issued an important and weighty statement on the present situation. Though this statement does not decide finally about our future course of action, it clarifies the position and indicates our objectives and the alternatives before us. In the course of the next few weeks it may be possible to take a further and more definite decision which may lead to consequences involving the resignation of Congress Ministries. But to say that such resignation is inevitable would be wrong. There are other possible developments. In any event Congress Ministries must realise that there is a possibility of conflict on wider national issues and this will vitally affect their future. They have, therefore, to keep themselves in readiness for any eventuality.

Meanwhile Congress Ministers are invited to study carefully the Working Committee's statement and to appreciate all its implications. It any conversation with the Governor or any communication with the Government of India, the background of this statement has always to be borne in mind and emphasised. They have to make it clear to their respective Governors that the Working Committee's statement is not to be treated lightly and those who do so will do so at their peril.

It is also desirable that early steps to taken to pass a resolution in the Provincial Assemblies giving full support to the

in a measure which could not have reached even by spending a million of rupees and this much over only a resolution of ours. The Congress has not taken any step as yet. You can well imagine what an amount of advertisement we may get when we act. Such is the glory of sacrifice and self-suffering.

During recent weeks many people have cultivated a sudden friendship for India They have begun to take interest in Indian question although they never had anything to do with it all their lives. Some hold out threats and draw lurid pictures of the sufferings we may have to encounter ; some would like to impress upon us what an injury our move would inflict upon allied war effort. I say, how am I to reply to all these friendly and unfriendly criticisms gratuitously being offered. We have no press ; we have no radio. Government have put strict censorship everywhere. Whatever news or views they choose to allow to go out of this country can alone reach the outside world. How are they going to know our agony ?

The Government tells all the world outside that Congress is a clique ; they are a handful of agitators ; they have no influence whatsoever with the vast masses of Indian people—90 millions of Muslims, 50 millions of Harijans, 70 millions of Indian States population are not with the Congress. The Radicals are not with them, the Democrats are not with them ; nor are the Communists with them. I ask if nobody is with us, why worry about us so much ? Again, if these people are not with us, the British authority in India certainly is, and this is enough for our purpose. We have certainly is, and this is enough for our purpose. We have to settle our accounts with them before every one else.

If British wants to delude herself and delude the world that they can carry on the conduct this war to victory without the hearty cooperation of 400 millions of Indians, she is bound to be disillusioned in the end. Neither India, nor the world outside is so gullible as to swallow all the misleading campaign through the press and the radio broadcasting on the part of Britain.

For three years we held our patience. Gandhiji continuously spoke and wrote about non-embarrassment to Britain in her war efforts. But even his proverbial patience has, at last, exhausted itself. The war is knocking at our doors. The Britishers claim that they have made every arrangement for defending India. But do we not know that they said the same about Burma, about Malayas ? Without the hearty cooperation of Indians, it is impossible to defend India.

In spite of Britain's protestations and her efforts, Burma was swallowed by Japan. We do not propose to allow our country to the same fate. That is why we are now out to act irrespective of all prudential consideration. Singapore they tom-tomed all the world over as the most invulnerable outpost. It was impregnable. Millions upon millions of pounds were poured over this construction. Mr. Amery boasted day in and day out about its invlunerability. But we all saw that it crashed like a house of cards. Its fall was swifter than any other out-post. Mr. Amery then began to tell the world that in Singapore no defence preparations were made on the Malaya side. The Government had a compunction for taxing the poor Malaya population for a double defence, but that Malaya was not so important after all and in Burma they will smash the Japanese. Now Burma too has slipped out of their hands and the enemy is knocking on the Indian borders. Under these conditions, if Britain cannot show sufficient confidence in her own self, how are we to trust her capacity ? Even the National War Front will do as they have now begun to feel so amongst themselves that Britain may not be able to defend India.

So if the Britishers are similarly beaten in India by Japan, it would be a case of King Log for King Storck and our slavery would remain. It is for this reason that we have now decided to stand and act as freemen.

The Congress has taught us to call a spade a spade and we speak out our minds without reservation. But it is obvious that it is the Government of India who are playing the role of real friends of the Japanese. We are being promised complete

freedom at the conclusion of the war ! But are you sure ? who would be there to bestow freedom upon us at that time ? Where is the guarantee that you would not be so disabled as to render any such thing impossible ? If India slips into the hands forward, where shall we go to search Mr. Churchill then ? And assuming that you win, where is the guarantee, I ask again, that you who are so reluctant to part with power when red-ruin is starring you straight in the face to-day, where is the guarantee I ask that will be generous and brave and honourable after victory is won ? That is not your tradition at least. How can we forget the fate which befell the poor Prof. Woodrow Wilson at the end of the last world war ? And how Lloyd George floored him ? I tell you, nobody trusts the British statesmen and their promises to-day. You cannot show a single act of good grace on their part throughout their history.

When Cripps' proposals came out people felt there may be some material in it to find a solution. But like Pandora's box, nothing but sinister schemes to divide India and to perpetuate her divisions came out of it. Our communal differences, our internal quarrels were made an excuse against handing over power to us. Were there no quarrels in Burma ? Were there no differences ? Then why did you leave it ? You never tarried there even for a while disputting on the question as to whom you were to hand over Burma. You left her to her fate and ran for life leaving her in the lurchleaving all your imperial obligations and the rest to take care of themselves. The Governor of Burma now boasts in London that they left Burma only after reducing everything to dust as a result of scorch-earth policy, that not a single brick was left intact in any Burma town. So you promise the same thing in India if a like emergency arises ? Who is going to lose and suffer more in that event ? You the runaways or we the sons of soil ? You are dubbing the new Burma Government put up by the Japanese as a puppet Government a quisling Government. What else, I ask, is the toy show you have put up at Delhi ?

The Congress agreement is only one. India cannot sit idle at such a time of crisis, depending upon Britain for her defence. We simply do not trust her capacity to defend us without our cooperation. And we shall not cooperate save as freemen. We must, therefore, prepare ourselves and for this, we must first have our own freedom. If that is inconvenient to you and if that exasperates you, we are sorry.

The number of friends in England who claim to be the friends of India are upset over our attitude. Major Attlee of the British Labour Party is one of them. To-day having come to power, he has gone more reactionary even than Mr. Churchill. A Socialist of Mr. Cripps position also has turned an Imperialist to-day and the labour organ like the "Daily Herald" is upset over the Wardha Resolution and indulges in threats. I say, if there is any real goodwill towards India in the British to American public opinion, this, the present resolution is going to be the test of it. But I may tell you that the amount of anger and resentment with which our present attitude is being received and criticised in those countries does not indicate, and make us doubtful, that any such goodwill exists in those countries. The fact is that Britain does not want to defend India for the sake of Indian people but wants to defend her in order to retain her as a bond-slave and as a precious possession.

We are accused of inviting Japanese by our present move. This is an abominable lie and calumny. No one in India wants Japanese here, but every Indian wants the Britisher to quit India. There is nothing wrong or improper in this. We offered to fight shoulder to shoulder on equal terms along with the Britishers, American, and Chinese, but that evidently does not suit Britain. Why not then say plainly that you want the status quo ? Why all this talk of free India as an act of grace, and negotiations and mutual adjustments ? We do not seek safety as England's indentured slaves hereafter. That shall never be. Those in England who claim to be India's friends have to prove their bona fides and their sincerity to-day.

Now Sir Stafford Cripps misrepresents to America India's stand and wants America's help in suppressing the Indian

movement. What a shame ? If you want America's help to fight even an unarmed people pledged to non-violence, what stand are you going to make against Axis powers ? Even the name of the brave industrious China is dragged in. India should make up her quarrel with Britain in order that China may not be neglected in the midst of her life's peril. May I ask how did you come to cultivate this sudden solicitude for China ? China is fighting Japan for the last five years. Who helped Japan by America ? When Congress protested against Manchukuo atrocities. Mr. Amery described it on the floor of Parliament as an incident in Japan's imperial scheme. How could England herself an Imperial power interfere then ? Such was British attitude towards China ! Russia too was out of the fray then. And we do not know Britain's attitude towards the Bolsheviks till the very movement of Russia throwing herself against the Axis. They talk of forgetting the past. But how do you expect us to forget what happened during the present war itself ? Then again they talk of people's War, war in defence of democracies. It is evident that it is a People's War with Russia and China. It is a total war. But is it so with England ? If so, what response has England made to all our demands repeated from time to time, to declare their war aims. If really it is a war in defence of democracies all over the world, what prevents them from saying so in respect of India ? But no. That cannot be. India must accept her Rulers war as her own and help it to victory without questioning why ! Are not the freedom and civilization in peril ? When France fell she too was exhorted to fight and fight on. England even offered her a single nation-hood for both the countries over-night, implored her and entreated her for such a merging of fates. Nothing impeded such a process. No time was necessary to conclude such vast changes as welding of two nations so different in culture and different in temperament. But in India how can you think of constitutional changes in the midst of a total war. How can you think of changing horses in mid-stream.

Mr. Churchill found time to go across the Atlantic to confer with president Roosevelt. They met somewhere to draw the Atlantic Charter. Somebody asked where was India ? Mr.

Churchill's reply was that India cannot have a mention there. The Atlantic Charter was made for European countries. India was a domestic question. It was a show-down also of American sympathy.

Then a fresh treaty was concluded with Russia for twenty years. Poor Russia fighting alone and unaided for two years with her back to the wall signed a fresh treaty with Britain. Herself hard pressed she would not demand a declaration from Britain in respect of India's place. She too repeated, when asked, the same answer : "India was Britain's domestic question. Russia cannot interfere". We know what hell Russia has suffered at the hands of the Axis and is suffering to-day. We have no quarrel with her for trying to suit England with reference to India. But after all that she has been still fighting alone. Her allies cannot establish contact with her. When her own freedom is in jeopardy, what can we expect from her to do for us ?

Now I will make a few observations regarding the coming struggle. Gandhiji has already warned you. We have fought many campaigns in the past. But I may tell you, the coming struggle would be very different. We see how Russia and China are fighting for their freedom · with what grim determination they suffer and die. Do not delude yourselves with thoughts of a settlement. You will be sadly mistaken. There is no jail-filling also this time. This is going to be a different struggle altogether. The resolution before you have not been framed with a light-heart. If you feel that things should remain safe, the trade and industry should carry on normally, that at the most we shall go to the jails, rest there and read there and write thesis, if you have any such notions as regards the coming struggle, please do not pass this resolution. But if you feel that in the face of every contingency you are determined to achieve complete independence of your country, then say good-luck and God-speed to you. Also mind you. Whatever gain may accrue from the struggle and through your efforts and sacrifices, you are not to expect anything for yourselves. Only the country as a whole shall gain. Then alone you may join the struggle. This is not a game of power politics.

Somebody in the British Parliament referred to one of my statements saying that Congress does not want power for itself. Only Britain must part with power. Give it to any group or groups in India. The questioner was told not by the Congress. But then the Congress President, Maulana Saheb, himself repeated the same saying, "Hand over power to whomsoever you like provided they are Indians; hand it to the Muslim League. We shall settle amongst ourselves afterwards."

The Britishers talk always of having peace in India. I say it is the peace of the grave-yard. But India is no longer agreed to that status! The bubble of your omnipotence has burst. We now know you cannot protect us; we must free ourselves, and defend ourselves. We also know that you are not likely to give us power with good grace. You shall leave here as you had to leave elsewhere.

We have not to free ourselves through violence. That is not our way. Our weapon is non-violence. Whatever its merits, it is this weapon of non-violence which has raised us in the eyes of the world during the last 22 years. But it is not necessary for the coming struggle that non-violence is indispensable even in thought. It would be enough if we remain perfectly non-violent in action. Everyone asks what is the programme. In all our campaigns, Gandhiji has given us programmes at the proper time. This time too, he may give or he may not give a programme. He is there to guide us and to command us. We are not to reason why. We must carry out his commands.—Be they hot or be they soft, a soldier knows only to obey his Commander.

We are being threatened from all quarters. We know the methods of the Government. They will round up the leaders; round up all; they will issue Communiques and Ordinances. They have prepared many and kept them ready. There is little that is new in all this. They must have got most of the Ordinances from their old files. We may not mind them. We may only mind the responsibility that falls on us. So long as Gandhiji remains on the scene, we have only to do his bidding. We must obey orders strictly and be disciplined. We must

any lawful action taken by the Provincial Government in the discharge of their responsibility. Provincial Governments have right to expect the cooperation of the Central Government in their difficult task of maintaining law and order. That, apart from withholding it, any of us should attribute motives or make comments which would encourage defiance to lawful order or render their task more difficult is a negation of that accommodation between the Central ana Provincial Governments, which is essential if we are to avoid an open conflict between the Centre and the provinces.

I feel that there is still time to prevent th s dangerous tendency from becoming further accentuated and stop matters from passing from unfair criticism to open encouragement to defiance. I would, therefore, suggest for Your Excellency's consideration that the impropriety of the action of the Members concerned may be impressed upon them and they may be informed that consistently with their duties and obligations as Members of Government, they should refrain from any comments or criticism which would be likely to embarrass the Government of the Punjab in its present difficulties Of course, if they wish to continue in their course, the only honourable course for them is to resign.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
29 January 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I was not a little surprised to receive your letter of 25 January regarding the Fortnightly Appreciations, but it then occurred to me that you were used to war-time standard of objectivity in these Appreciations.

The Appreciation is prepared in draft by the Principal Information Officer and is then scrutinised by [A.E.] Porter

and [G.S.] Bozman. This scrutiny is as thorough as one can expect. It then comes to me for final approval. My main concern is to see that the Appreciation conforms to the principle of objectivity to which you have referred and with which I am in complete accord. Any changes that I make are guided by this principle and I take care to see, at this stage, that as a whole the Appreciation reflects the political reasons as voiced in the Press during the relevant period. In the two Appreciations, to which you have referred, I found little to add from this point of view. You have, of course, to bear in mind that during this period while the Congress circles were active, the League was quiescent and it was therefore inevitable that the activities of the former should figure more prominently than those of the latter. But for that the department can hardly be blamed.

I have looked up the two Appreciations again, but I am unable to find anything to which one could reasonably take objection. However, if you have any particular portions to point out, I would welcome the opportunity of re-examining them with a view to improvement in future.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel.

His Excellency Field Marshal
The Right Honourable Viscount Wavell

New Delhi
22 March 1947

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am sorry to trouble you on the eve of your departure with the enclosed copy of a telegram which the Managing Editor of the Hindustan Times has received from the President of the Singh Sabha, Gujarkhan, in Rawalpindi district, and the former's letter to the Secretary to H E. the Governor of the Punjab. But I thought that the description given there would be of interest to you. It may be an exaggerated picture, but it could not be wholly untrue.

You will notice that the Hindustan Times did not publish the telegram.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Viscount Wavell.

ENCLOSURE

Copy of Message from President, Singh Sabha, Gujarkhan, 19 March 1947

Muslims launched a campaign of general slaughter and arson of Sikh life and property in the districts of Campbellpore, Rawalpindi and Chakwal sub-division of Jhelum. Gujarkhan and Pindi Towns are cordoned. To save their honour and religion hundreds of women jumped into wells and committed suicide. Hundreds of Sikhs and Hindus have been burnt and butchered although they valiantly defended themselves against heavy odds. Sikhs are the chief target. In Dubheran, small village in Kahuta Tehsil people after wounding were thrown in smouldering fire. Numbers of girls committed suicide. At Dhamali near Dubheran number of survivors does not exceed 20 percent. There residents kept the Muslim mob shouting Pakistan at bays for four day eventually overpowered by overwhelmingly large number. Mrs. Sant Gulab Singh advocate jumped into the well and was followed by 60 women. Number of butchered is very heavy. Kahuta was burnt by Muslims after the evacuation by Military. Mehlwan, Dera, Kuntrila, Gulyana, Dehra Bakshian, Dhera Khalsa, Anandan, Bhagpur, Banda Bassali, Takhat Pari, Narali Sayyed, Devi, Tawin, Pangrin Gorsian, Moghal, Sanjot Nadji Takla Sagri, Kusi, Siala, Pinjorbazar of Kallar and many others have been burnt. At Dhala 12 persons were set on fire after sprinkling oil on their garment. Sukho and Daultala gave good fight and before their fall Military arrived to their succour. Dubhial residents gave good fight to Muslim mob for four days. Officials arranged peace and took away legitimate arms from Sikhs without disarming the insurgent Muslims who burnt the town after this. Sikhs' hair and beard were forcibly shorn. Hindus and Sikhs were

compelled to eat beef. Gurdwaras and Temples desecrated and destroyed. Eight thousand refugees have arrived Gujarkhan so far and local public is sparing no pains in service. Even in local Civil Hospital milk and food are supplied free to seriously wounded by non-official agency. Retired Muslim Military persons conducted operations. Non-Muslims in villages of Gujarkhan and Kahuta Tehsil are 26,000 and 11,000 respectively. State of affairs is highly deplorable and surpasses all inhuman atrocities.

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New Delhi
8 May 1947

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

Please refer to your letter dated 27 April 1947 and my reply thereto of 28 April 1947 regarding the law and order position in Bihar.

2. I have had discussion on this question with the Bihar Premier and have impressed on him the need for maintaining strict discipline and good morale in his police force. He has promised to make every effort to this end and I have no doubt that he will fulfil his promise. I have also told him that in this task he will have my full support and you can assure the Governor that I shall not spare myself in supporting the Prime Minister in such action as he considers necessary to achieve this object.

3. The Governor has also referred to the part the Socialists are taking in fomenting trouble among the rank and file of the police. This question is engaging the attention of the Congress Working Committee and you can rest assured that they will take appropriate action.

4. Regarding the anti-smuggling force, I understand from the Premier that the Government have decided to disarm it.

5. As regards the appointment of a commission to enquire into the Bihar riots, I agree with the Governor and yourself that this step would be most inadvisable. I have exerted my influence to the extent I could to dissuade Gandhiji from pursuing this matter further, but the difficulty is created by the insistent demand of the League leaders, both inside and outside

the province. Suhrawardy has written and spoken to Gandhiji on this subject and Mr. Jinnah, during his last interview with Gandhiji, also referred to this matter. In the circumstances, the best course may lie in delays and that I understand the Prime Minister is doing.

6. The Governor has been good enough to refer to my support to the Prime Minister in a strong line against the prominent members of the Congress Socialist Party and other individuals and measures undermining the discipline of the police force in the province. You know full well how anxious I am to exert myself to the utmost of my capacity to maintain peace and security in India. I hope you will convey to the Governor the pledge of my firm support to his Prime Minister in achieving this in the province of Bihar.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

H.E. Viscount Mountbatten of Burma

New Delhi
9 July 1947

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

As a consequence of partition, numerous administrative arrangements will be necessary on or about 15 August 1947 if we are to avoid confusion in or breakdown of administrative machinery. For instance, in lieu of those going away to Pakistan personnel will have to be in position for operating and running telegraph services, railway services, civil aviation services, etc. Similarly officers and staff will have to be in position for the supervision of despatch of stores, equipment etc. going to Pakistan, and taking custody of those retained for India and vice-versa. Again, in view of certain radio stations being transferred to Pakistan, the P and T and the Civil Aviation Departments may have to alter their present arrangements for communications ; the Meteorological Department may need some change in the machinery for communicating weather information to the Civil Aviation Department and other departments. The Finance Department would have to arrange for verification of cash and other balances of treasuries and of branches of the Imperial Bank performing treasury functions

in Pakistan as on 10 August. These are only some obvious instances but there will be a large number of matters in which detailed action will have to be taken by various executive organisations such as the Income-tax, Customs and General Excise Departments. In regard to some of these matters action will have been decided upon already ; in regard to others, decisions cannot be taken finally until the Partition Council has itself come to a decision, and in such cases alternative schemes will have to be kept ready which can be put into operation as soon as a decision has been taken. It is clear thus that over a very wide field, certain administrative arrangements will have to be made as a result of the very act of separation and in order that the necessary preliminary action is taken in good time, it is essential that all the important positions in every department and attached and subordinate offices are held well before the 15th August by officers who have decided to remain in India.

2. Moreover, it is obvious that those who have opted for Pakistan will no longer be interested in safeguarding the interests of India, but will be more concerned in doing everything they can to promote the interests of Pakistan even by prejudicing those of India. We cannot look for any co-operation from them even in the day-to-day administration, let alone in matters of importance. The possibility cannot be ignored of the enthusiasm of some of these persons outrunning their discretion, and we must provide against the danger of sabotage, etc. in certain key departments, as for example telephones. These circumstances, in my view, make it essential that we take these persons off their regular administrative duties and replace them as soon as possible by those who have elected to serve India. The former can be placed, for the time being until they leave for Pakistan, on special duty, or can be given special joining time.

3. I suggest that this change should take place with immediate effect.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Viscount Mountbatten of Burma
New Delhi.

PART II

BRITISH COLONIAL INTERPRETATIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS

The British Government are averse from using the phrase 'Dominion Status' to describe even the ultimate and remote good of Indian political development, because it has been laid down that the Dominion Status means the right to decide their own destinies, and this right we are not prepared to accord to India at present, or in any way to prejudge the question whether it should even be accorded. I think it is fit to infer from this that separatism should be regarded as a hostile movement.

Lord Birkenhead,
Secretary of State for India

8

BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

I*

Gentlemen, the address which you have just presented to me, and which I gratefully acknowledge, adds a contribution of no small value to the generous volume of welcome which has been accorded to me upon my arrival to take up the post of Viceroy of India. It is, I think, the first address that has reached me from an exclusively Indian source ; and it furnishes me, therefore, with the opportunity of conveying my thanks not merely to yourselves, but to the many thousands of your countrymen who, throughout India, have combined to testify in so marked a manner the loyalty to the Queen-Empress by the reception which they have accorded to her representative. The Queen has herself enjoined me to profit by the first occasion of expressing her sentiments of warm interest in her Indian subjects ; and I shall not assume any undue prerogative if I say that the intensity of those feelings is only matched by the reciprocal attachment and veneration which they have aroused in the bosom of the Indian peoples towards their Gracious Sovereign. I derive additional pleasure from the presentation of your address owing to the fact that, as long ago as 1891, when I was Under-Secretary of State for India in England, I was made acquainted with the influential and representative character of your Association, and with the excellent work which it has done. Your address contains a brief epitome of the recent vicissitudes through which the

*Viceroy Lord Curzon's speech at Calcutta on 11.1.1899 in reply to an address from the British Indian Association.

Indian Empire has passed. Those vicissitudes, comprising as they have done the almost simultaneous trials of frontier warfare, plague and famine have laid a heavy tax upon the resources of the country and the patience of its inhabitants. The teachings of previous experience and the results of long preparation enabled the Government of Lord Elgin to encounter the famine with greater success than on any previous occasion ; and the manner in which these periodical visitations, inseparable from the Indian climate, are now met constitutes in itself no mean justification of British rule. The plague has not been similarly stamped under foot ; but the methods adopted for its eradication have, I believe, been shaped into the requisite harmony of sanitary precaution with respect for natural susceptibilities. You call my attention to the interests of the landed proprietors and the preservation of the old and influential families of the Province of Bengal. My own inclinations, whether in England or in India, are conservative in respect of the land, because I hold that a territorial proprietary long associated with the soil, trained in its management, familiar with its traditions, and conscious of their responsibilities, is an element of stability in a community. In this respect my views are but a reflex of that which has been the constant policy of the British Government in India, and notably in this Province of Bengal. The future of Self-government in Municipal institutions is, as you justly observe, a question which will claim by attention. It would be presumptuous in me as yet to make any opinion derived from Western experience the basis of an induction as to the principles or methods which may be feasible here. The measure of the growth of any civilised community is, however, its capacity to assume within safe and well-ascertained limits the responsibility for its own regulation ; and in India, as elsewhere, there is required for this problem of political and ethical evolution not merely the goodwill of the deponents of power, but the aptitude of the depositories for the exercise of the functions that may be committed to their care. In Eastern countries, which are lacking in the traditions of Self-government, the rate of progress is relatively slow ; but the future historian of India will record that during the 40 years which have elapsed since the direct Government of India

passed to the Crown, it has been steady and sure. Gentlemen, I am much obliged for your address, and I should like to add one word of personal thanks to Maharaja Bahadur Sir Narendra Krishna for the graceful additional phrases of welcome with which he preceded the printed address, and also for his kindness in remembering that to day is my birth-day, and in according me his own felicitations and those of your important Association.

II*

My Lord Mayor, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen—Let me begin by thanking the Chamberlain very warmly for his kind reference to Lady Curzon. Though, as he remarked not officially present here to-day, she is yet in this hall to hear the courteous things that he said about her, and with which, in reference to the assistance she has rendered to me and to the work that she has done in India, I venture cordially to associate myself. My Lord Mayor, I do not suppose that there is any honour which a public man can value more highly than the freedom of the City of London. No fee can purchase it, no conqueror can claim it as his own ; it is the free gift of the Corporation of the greatest city in the world, and it has the added dignity of the associations that accompany it, and the memory of the illustrious names with which each fresh recipient is proud to find his own enrolled. But, my Lord Mayor, the honour seems to me to carry an especial grace when it is conferred upon those servants of the Crown who have been serving their country in distant parts, for it shows them that in their absence they have not been altogether forgotten, and that those of you who are at the heart of the Empire are not indifferent to what is passing on the outskirts. By a law which was designed for different times, and which, in my opinion, is now obsolete, no Viceroy of India can leave India, whatever the urgency, public or private, without vacating his office and so it is that a man may be absent, as I have been, from his country for an unbroken period of five and a half years without sight

*Viceroy Lord Curzon's speech at the Guildhall, Calcutta.

or sound of home. During his long exile the weight and isolation of his great post tell heavily upon time. Fatigue of body and spirit often weigh him down ; the volume of the work that he has to discharge is such as no man who has not undertaken it can well imagine. You may judge therefore, my Lord Mayor,—what a reward I had almost said,—what a tonic to body and soul is such reception as this to such a man ; how his heart was within him at the sympathetic recognition of his countrymen, and when fresh courage and spirit are infused into him to go forth again and renew his task. Mr. Lord Mayor, the City Chamberlain in his speech has drawn an appreciative and flattering picture of some of the aspects of the Administration with which I have been concerned. If I detected in some of his remarks the too generous partiality of one old Etonian for another. I am yet conscious of the service that he rendered to India by drawing the attention of this representative assemblage to some features in our recent administration.

British Rule in India

May I also take advantage of the present opportunity to say a few words to my countrymen about that great charge—the greatest that is anywhere borne by the English people, nay, more, in my judgment, the most onerous and the most impressive that has ever rested upon the shoulders of a conquering and a civilised race ? I sometimes think that the most remarkable thing about British rule in India is the general ignorance that prevails about it in England. Seventy years ago Lord Macaulay said, in his great speech about the Government of India, that a broken head in Coldbath Fields produced a greater sensation amongst us than three pitched battles in India. Twenty years later Lord Dalhousie, that great pro-Consul, wrote that nothing short of a great victory or a great defeat in India created in English society the faintest interest in Indian affairs. If these are the tests of English interest in India, then my lords, any such service as it may have been in my power to render must be, indeed, unknown. But I think that things have somewhat advanced since those days. Communications have greatly improved between the two countries ; postal and telegraphic

charges have been cheapened ; more cold-weather visitors come out to us in India every year ; and there is always an intelligent minority of persons here who follow, with the utmost interest, everything that goes on there. Yet, in its main essentials, the indictment still remains true, and you have only got to look to the morning newspapers, with rare exceptions—and there are exceptions, for instance, I was delighted to see, only a day or two ago, that the *Times* has announced its intention of recommencing the series of periodical articles upon India which those of us who are interested in that country used to read with so much delight in by-gone days—I say, you have only to look to the newspapers to see that, with rare exceptions, the average Englishman is much more interested in the latest football or cricket match, in a motor trial, or in a wrestling encounter, than he is in the greatest responsibility that has been undertaken by his fellow-countrymen on the face of the earth. Even if he looks abroad he sees more and hears more about the 11,000.000 who inhabit the Colonies than he does about the 300,000,000 who inhabit India. In the happiness of our insular detachment, or in the pride of racial expansion, he forgets that the greatest constituent of the Empire in scale and in importance lies neither in these islands, nor in the Colonies, but in your great Asiatic dependency. It is true, my lords and gentlemen, that for this ignorance and want of proportion on his part there is abundant excuse. Here are our own people ; this is the hearthstone of the Empire and the nursery of this race ; these islands must always be our first concern : even the Colonies are, in a sense, only one stage more distant, because they are peopled by our own kith and kin. India, on the other hand, is very remote and very unintelligible, and the average Englishman, if only he bears nothing about it from day to day, is apt to think that matters must be going on sufficiently well. My lords and gentlemen, I have always ventured to hold a different idea about British rule in India. To me it is the greatest thing that the English people have done, or are doing now ; it is the supreme touchstone of national duty.

Our Indian Record

If the nations of the earth were to stand up to be judged by some supreme tribunal I think that upon our European record,

or upon our colonial record, we should survive the test. But if there were the slightest hesitation on the part of the judge or jury I would not hesitate to throw our Indian record into the scales. For where else in the world, my lords and gentlemen, has a race gone forth and subdued, not a country nor a kingdom, but a continent, and that continent not peopled by savage tribes. but by races with traditions and a civilisation older than our own, with a history not inferior to ours in dignity or romance, subduing them not to the law of the sword, but to the rule of justice, bringing peace and order and good Government to nearly one-fifth of the entire human race, and ruling them with so mild a restraint that the rulers are the merest handful amongst the ruled, a tiny speck of white foam upon the dark and thunderous ocean ? I hope I am no rhapsodist, but I will say that I would as soon be a citizen of the country that has wrought this deed then I would be of the country that defeated the Armada, or produced Hampden or Pitt. But we all live in a severely practical age, and I can afford to be rather more concrete in my illustrations. I should like to convey to this audience some idea of the part India is capable of playing, nay, of the part that it has recently played in the Imperial burden. As I say, my illustrations shall be drawn from recent history and from my own experience. Two of them have been mentioned by the City Chamberlain in his speech. If you want to save your colony of Natal from being overrun by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help, and gives it ; if you want to rescue the white men's Legations from massacre at Peking, and the need is urgent, you ask the Government of India to despatch an expedition, and they despatch it ; if you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discover that Indian troops and Indian Generals are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Government of India to send them ; if you desire to defend any of your extreme outposts or coaling-stations of the Empire, in Mauritius, Singapore, Hongkong, even Tientsin ; or Shan-haikwan, it is to the Indian Army that you turn ; if you want to build a railway in Uganda or in the Sudan, you apply for Indian labour. When the late Mr. Rhodes was engaged in developing your recent acquisition of Rhodesia, he turned to me for assistance. It is with Indian coolie labour that you exploit the plantations

equally of Demerara and Natal; it is with Indian trained Officers that you irrigate Egypt and dam the Nile: it is with Indian Forest Officers that you tap the resources of Central Africa and Siam, with Indian surveyors that you explore all the hidden places of the earth. Speaking before an audience such as this, I should wish, if I had time, my Lord Mayor, also to demonstrate to this great assemblage that, in my opinion, India is a country where much greater openings for the investment of capital would lie in the future than has been hitherto the case, and where a great future of industrial and commercial exploitation lies before us. Then, again, how familiar we are in recent times with the argument that India is the vulnerable point of the Empire. And assuredly it is true that if we were engaged in a great international law—which God forbid—it is not at Dover nor London that one, at any rate, of your possible antagonists would strike. He would not bombard Quebec or land a force in Sydney Harbour. It is in Asia that the pressure would be applied; it is your Indian frontier that would bear the brunt. It is there or thereabouts, that in all probability the future of your dominion might be decided. There is an old proverb which says, "He that England fain would win, must with Ireland first begin." I have always thought that this was rather a dubious compliment to our brothers across St. George's Channel, but I suppose it alludes to the times when the foreign invader who had aggressive intentions upon us used to begin his invasion in that quarter. At all events, if you were now to substitute "India" for "Ireland" in the refrain, I do not think you would be so very far from the mark. I hope I have said enough therefore, my lords and gentlemen—I only meant at this stage of my observations—to show you that you cannot afford to leave India out of your calculations. She is as important to you as you are beneficial to her. In the world politics of the future, believe me, India will play an increasing part, and a time will come when in our reformed Board Schools free from any friction or annoyance, the average English boy will require to know more about India than he does now, will require to know as much about India as he does now about Marathon or Waterloo. Of course, I grant, my Lord Mayor, that the features of government in the two

countries are entirley different. And perhaps this is the main cause of the ignorance and misconception to which I have referred.

English and Indian Problems

We have in India good many of the problems that you have here but they are magnified almost beyond recognition by the complexity of the factors and the immensity of the scale. We also have our own factors, to which in the tranquil uniformity of life in these islands, you are fortunately strangers. You have not the perpetual and harassing anxiety of a land frontier 5,700 miles in length, peopled by hundreds of different tribes, most of them inured to religious fanaticism and hereditary rapine. A single outbreak at a single point might set entire sections of that frontier ablaze. Then, beyond it, we are brought into direct contact with the picturesque but perilous stability of native States and independent, or quasi-independent, Native States, some of them incurably diseased, hastening to their fall ; and behind them, again, are the muffled figures of great European Powers, advancing nearer and nearer, and some of them finding in the conditions temptations to action not in strict accordance with the interest that we are bound to defend. That, my Lord Mayor, is the external problem of India. Then if we look within, whereas you in England have a population that is relatively homogeneous, we have to deal in India with races th t are as different from each other as the Esquimaux is from the Spaniard or the Irishman from the Turk, with creeds that range between the extreme points of the basest animalism on the one hand, and the most exalted metaphysics on the other ; with standards of life that cover the whole space between barbarism and civilisation. You have here an aristocracy that is drawn from the people, and that goes back to it. Our aristocracy in India consists of native chiefs of diverse races, many of them as much aliens to the people as we ourselves, presenting every variety of *status* and privilege, from the magnificent potentates that you sometimes see in this country to the pettiest landed proprietor. You hardly know here what the phrase "land revenue" means. In India it is the be-all and end-all of millions of population, and it is the mainspring of

our internal administration. In England your railways are built, managed, and financed by private enterprise : in India they are one of the chief charges of Government. I remember that it fell to me, as Viceroy, to issue orders, on my own responsibility, as to the better accommodation for native passengers in third-class carriages. Here, in England, your education problem, as any Parliamentarian present will bear me out, is thorny enough ; but it is as nothing compared with ours in India, where we are trying to graft the science of the west on to an eastern stem ; where we have to deal with religious differences compared with which all your sectarian animosities almost sink into the shade ; where we have chaos of languages and stages of mental organisation that extend, as I remarked, from the transcendentalist to the savage. Then, here in England you do not know what famine is. My Lord Mayor, I thank the Chamberlain for the remarks he made on that subject in his address. It is quite true I had to administer in India the greatest famine that has ever befallen that country in modern times within the range to which it applied, and I can assure you that it is in experience that will wring blood from a stone. You have your sunshine and storms, your drought and your floods here in this country, but you do not know the appalling possibilities that are summed up in the single word "monsoon," and which spell the difference in India between life and death to areas in any one of which the whole of the United Kingdom might be swallowed up. You have your suffering and destitution, but you have not such an appalling visitor as the plague—the plague now in its seventh year in India defying analysis, defeating the utmost efforts of medical skill and the administrative energy, inscrutable in origin, merciless in its ravages, sweeping off, as our records show, very often thousands in a day and tens of thousands in a week, then, above all, your public men in England have not before them the haunting question that is always before us in India, like a riddle of the Sphinx—what is in the heart of all those sombre millions, whither are we leading them, what is it all to come to, where the goal ? Such, my Lord Mayor, are some of the superficial differences between the problem of government in India and in England. They are, I think, suffi-

cient to show you that those who are charged with the government of that great dependency can seldom have a careless moment or an idle hour. They are weighed down with anxiety, an almost overpowering responsibility and with unending toil. But I can assure you that every one of them, from the Governor-General down to the latest-joined Civilian, is proud of the duty, and resolved to do justice to it ; and when the Commander is called up and praised a thrill runs down the ranks, and encourages the latest-joined private in the lines.

Reform and Reconstruction

Sir Joseph Dimsdale said something about the character of the work in which we have been engaged during the past five years. My Lord Mayor, it has been a work of reform and reconstruction. Epochs arise in the history of every country when the administrative machinery requires to be taken to pieces and overhauled and readjusted to the altered necessities and growing demands of the hour. The engines are not working to their scheduled capacity, the Engineers are perhaps slack. I agree with those who inscribe on their administrative banners the motto "Efficiency." But my conception of efficiency is to practise as well as to preach it. It is with this object that we have conducted an enquiry in India into every branch of the administration. First we began with the departments themselves, the offices of Government, revising the conditions under which they work, freeing them from the impediments of excessive writing with its consequences of strangulation of all initiative and dilatoriness in action. Then we proceeded to enquire into every branch of the Government in turn ; we endeavoured to frame a plague policy which should not do violence to the instincts and sentiments of the native population ; a famine policy which should profit by the experience of the past and put us in a position to cope with the next visitation when unhappily it bursts upon us ; an education policy which should free the intellectual activities of the Indian people, so keen and restless as they are, from the paralysing clutch of examinations ; a railway policy that should provide administratively and financially for the great extension that we believe to lie

before us ; an irrigation policy that should utilise to the *maximum*, whether remuneratively or unremuneratively all the available water resources of India, not merely in canals—I almost think we have reached the end there—but in tanks and reservoirs and wells ; a Police policy that will raise the standard of almost the only emblem of authority that the majority of the people see, and will free them from petty tyranny and oppression. It is impossible to satisfy all classes in India or elsewhere. There are some people who clamour for boons which it is impossible to give, but the administrator looks rather to the silent and inarticulate masses and if he can raise even by a little the level of material comfort and well-being in their lives he has earned his reward. I am glad that our finances in India put us in the position to give the people the first reduction of taxation that they have enjoyed for twenty years. We have endeavoured to render the land revenue more equitable in its incidence, to lift the load of usury from the shoulders of the peasant, and to check that reckless alienation from the soil which in many parts of the country was fast converting him from a free proprietor to a bond slave. We have done our best to encourage industries which little by little will relieve the congested field of agriculture, develop the indigenous resources of India, and gradually make that country more and more self-providing in the future. I would not indulge in any boast, but I venture to think as the result of these efforts I can point to an India that is more prosperous, more contented, and more hopeful. Wealth is increasing in India. There is no test you can apply which does not demonstrate it. Trade is growing. Evidences of progress and prosperity are multiplying on every side. Six years ago, just before I left England, a Committee of exports were sitting in London to provide us in India with that which is the first condition of economic finance—that is, a sound currency policy. I thank Sir Henry Fowler, the Chairman of the Committee, and the authorities co-operating with him, for the great services they rendered to India. Profiting by their labours we have introduced there a gold standard and established fixity of exchange, and we seem to have put an end to the fitful and demoralising vagaries of the silver rupee.

Indian Loyalty

But I think I can point to more satisfactory symptoms still. I believe there to be a steady and growing advance in the loyalty of the Indian people. When the late Queen Victoria died there was an outburst of sorrow throughout India almost equal to anything that you could see here in England. A little later on when the present King succeeded and we celebrated his coronation at Delhi, there was a similar display of national feeling, not at Delhi alone, but in every village and hamlet throughout that great continent. I know it has been the fashion in some quarters to deride that great ceremony at Delhi as a vast and unprofitable display. My Lord Mayor, if we spent about as much, and I do not think we spent more, in crowning the Emperor of 300,000,000 as you spent here in crowning the King of 42,000,000, I do not consider that we need reproach ourselves very much for what we did. But we did much more than that ; already the people of India knew and revered the Prince of Wales because they had seen him. We brought home to them at Delhi that that Prince was now their ruler and that in his rule were their security and salvation. We touched their hearts with the idea of a common sentiment and a common aim. Depend upon it, you will never rule the East except from the heart and the moment imagination has gone out of your Asiatic policy your Empire will dwindle and decay.

The Rule of Native Princes

There is another respect is which India has been advancing by leaps and bounds and on which I should like to say a brief word. In the point to which I am about to refer I doubt if India would be recognised by those who knew it a generation ago. The British public knows that about one-fourth or one-fifth of the population there is under the rule of native Princes and chiefs, though subject, of course, in all essentials to the British Parliament. There are many hundreds of these chiefs all included, but the most important of them number less than 100. In this country you know all about their ancient lineage, their customs and courts, the loyalty that they exhibit to the Crown. But it has sometimes been the fashion here to

regard them as picturesque experiences from the dull uniformity of Indian life, to look upon them as survivals, of an obsolete era without any practical utility and sometimes sunk in selfishness and lethargy. My Lords, that is not my idea of the Indian Princes. I have always been a devoted believer of the continued existence of the native States in India, and an ardent well-wisher of the native Princes, but I believe in them not as relics, but as rulers, not as puppets, but as living factors in the administration. I want them to share the responsibilities as well as the glories of British rule. Therefore it is that I have ventured to preach to them the gospel of duty of common service in the interests of the Empire, of a high and strenuous life. But you cannot expect them to attain these standards unless you give them an adequate education, and therefore it is that in consultation with them we have revised the entire curriculum of the Chiefs' colleges in India, which have been set up for their instruction, and if you thus train and educate them you must give them an object and a career. It is for this reason that, by permission of His Majesty the King, I founded that institution known as the Imperial Cadet Corps, where we give military education to the pick of the Indian aristocracy, and which will eventuate as time goes on, in granting for the first time commissions as British Officers to Indian chiefs, nobles, and gentlemen. My Lords and gentlemen, that is a policy of trust, but I am confident that it will be repaid, for already the Princes of India are giving to our efforts the response that might be expected of their nobility of character and their high traditions. They are coming forward in response to our appeals. They welcome, and do not resent these changes, and we are gradually, nay I think, we are quickly, creating there the spectacle of a throne surrounded by feudatories who not only render military service, but who also vie with it in administrative energy and devotion to the welfare of their people. My Lords and gentlemen, I ought not to conclude these remarks without saying a word about another and a wider aspect of our policy—the problem of frontier defence. It is not necessary for me to sing the praises of the Indian Army. The Indian Army has written its name on the map not only of India, but of the British

Empire. It is writing its name in the windy passes of Tibet at this moment. Army reform is very much in the air, and I can assure you that in India we are not free from the contagion. We are doing our best there in respect of equipment, organisation, and armament, and in readiness to mobilise and facilities a communication to carry out the lessons of the most recent science and the most recent experience. And since, as we have been told, you have banished to India our modern Hercules, we are not letting him rest, but are utilising him in the execution of labours every whit as important as those on which he might be engaged here.

Tibet and the Frontier Question

We have had a period of almost unbroken peace for six years on that stormy frontier of India, which looks towards the North-West and Afghanistan, and I think the reason is this —that, abandoning old and stale controversies, we have hit upon a policy in India that is both forward and backward— forward in so far as we hold up to our treaty frontier neither minimising nor shirking, obligations, backward in so far as we do not court a policy of expansion or adventure, but depend rather on a policy of co-operation and conciliation than one of coercion or subjugation of the tribes. I do not prophesy about the future. No man who has read a page of Indian history will ever prophesy about the frontier. We shall doubtless have trouble there again. Turbulence and fanaticism ferment in the blood of those races, but we have given you peace for a longer period than you have enjoyed at any time during the thirty years, and I believe that slowly and surely we are building up the fabric of local security and contentment on the frontier. But I am not sure that some student of public affairs will not interpolate at this moment the question—What, then, are you doing in Tibet, and how do you reconcile that with the policy of peace and conciliation that you have described? My Lord Mayor, the instruments of Government often cannot speak their own mind, and my lips are tied by obligations which you will be the first to recognise. At the same time, as the recent head of the Government of India, I may perhaps say a word. If we shrink

in India from expeditions, and if we culminate a policy of adventure, we had not the slightest hesitation or doubt in recommending the policy that we did to the Government. We felt that we could not afford any longer, with due regard to our interests and prestige on that section of the frontier, to acquiesce in a policy of unpovoked insults endured with almost unexampled patience at the hands of the Tibetan Government ever since they, and not we—please remember this ever since they, and not we—assumed the aggressive, and first invaded British territory eighteen years ago, and still less did we think think that we could accquiesce in this treatment at a time when the young and perverse ruler of Tibet, who it seems to me has shown himself to be the evil genius of his people, was refusing to hold any communication with us even to receive letters from the representatives of the British Sovereign, at the same time that he was conducting communication with another Great Power situated, not at his doors, but at a great distance away, and was courting its protection. I was sent to India, amongst other objects to guard the frontier of India and I have done it. I was not sent to India to let a hostile danger and menace grow up just beyond our gates and I have done my best to prevent it. There are people so full of knowledge at home that they assure us that all these fears are illusory and that we could with dignity and prudence have gone on turning our other cheek to the Tibetan smiter. These fears were not illusory. The danger was imminent and real. Perhaps the frontier states may be taken to know something about it and if we have as we never had before, the frontier states of Bhutan, Nepaul, and Sikkim all supporting our action and deploring the folly and obstinacy of the Tibetan Government, there must be strong *prima facie* ground that we are not entirely mistaken in our policy. No one regrets more than myself the fighting with innocent people or the slaughter of ill-armed but courageous men. I should have liked to carry it through without firing a shot, and we did our best to do so. Months were spent in the sincere but futile effort to avoid it, but only the meanest knowledge of the frontier is required to know that it is not vacillation that produces respect, and that the longer you hesitate and falter the severer is the reckoning

you have to pay. I hope that as the result of these operations we shall be able to introduce some measure of enlightenment into that miserable and monk-ridden country, and without adding to our own responsibilities which the Government are without the least wish to extend, we shall be able to ward off the source of political unrest and intrigue on this section of our border and gradually build up, as I believe it to be in our power to do, harmonious relations between the people of that countiy and ourselves. My lords and gentlemen, these have been the main incidents of the policy of the Government in India during the last six year.

Basis of British Rule in India

There is only one other feature of the situation to which I wish to allude, if you will bear with me, because it is in one sense the most important of all. I have been talking to-day about the acts and symptoms of British rule in India. What is its basis ? It is not military force. It is not civil authority. It is not prestige, though all these are part of it. If our rule is to last in India it must rest on a more solid basis. It must depend on the eternal moralities of righteousness and justice. This I can assure you is not a mere phrase of the conventicle. The matter is too serious on the lips of a Governor-General of India for cant. Unless we can persuade the millions of India that we will give to them absolute justice as between man and man, equality before the law, freedom from tyranny and injustice and oppression, then your Empire will not touch their hearts and will fade away. No one is more ready to admit than I that if you put side by side the rulers of the European races and the rulers of the Asiatic races, and particularly the Indian and English, where you have a small minority face to face with a vast alien conglomeration you cannot expect to have complete coalescence. On the one side you have pride of race, the duty of self-protection, consciousness of power ; on the other you have struggling sentiments and stifled aspirations. But, my Lord Mayor, a bridge must be built between the two, and on that bridge justice must stand with unerring scale. Harshness, oppression, illusage, all these in India are offences, not only against the higher law, but against the honor and

reputation of the ruling race. I am as strong a believer as any man in the prestige of my countrymen, but that prestige does not require artificial supports, it rests upon conduct and conduct alone. My precept in this respect does not differ from my practice. During the time I have been in India the Government have taken a strong stand for the fair treatment of our Indian fellow-subjects, who are equal with us in the eyes of God and the law. I rejoice to say that the conduct of Englishmen in general in India towards the Indians is exemplary, even in trying and provocative circumstances ; but where exceptions occur I think the sentiment of the majority should be as quick to condemn them as is with conduct and that the Government, which is above race or party, against whom any injustice is a reproach or a slur, should receive the unhesitating support of the entire community. That is the policy which the Government has pursued in my time, and by my conduct, my Lord Mayor and gentlemen, I am willing to be judged. I will now bring these remarks to close It is seventeen years since I first visited India ; it is fourteen years since I first had the honour of being connected with its administration. India was the first love, and throughout all that time it has been the main love of my political life. I have given to it some of my best years. Perhaps I may be privileged to give it yet more. But no man could do this unless he saw before India a large vision or were himself inspired with a fuller hope. If our Europe were to end tomorrow, I do not think that we need be ashamed of its epitaph. I would have done its duty to India, justified its mission to mankind. But it is not going to end. It is not a moribund organism. It is still in its youth and has in it the vitality of an unexhausted purpose. I am not with the pessimists in this matter. I am not of those who think we have built a mere fragile plank between the East and West which the roaring tides of Asia will sweep away presently. I do not think our work is over or drawing to an end. On the contrary, as the years roll by, the sky seems to me more clear, the duty more imperative, the work more majestic, the goal more sublime. I believe we have it in our power to will the people of India into a unity beyond anything they have dreamed of and to give them blessings beyond those they yet enjoy. Let no man admit

the craven fear that those who have won India cannot hold it, or that we have only made India to our own or its own making. That is not the true reading of history. That is not my forecast of the future. To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom—that our work is righteous and that it shall endure. I thank you, my lords and gentlemen, for the encouragement that has been given by the citizens through me to those engaged in this great and noble undertaking, and I shall go forth again refreshed and reinvigorated by your sympathy.

III*

My Lord Mayor,—I detect only one omission in your remarks, and it has reminded me of a still greater omission in the speech I made in the Guildhall this morning. When any assemblage of Englishmen meet together to extol the manner in which India is governed, do not let them forget the men by whom it is governed. This is the more necessary, because owing to the conditions of their work the majority of them are unknown at Home. The Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, a few high officials more or less fill the public eye and earn praise for the work which is done by others. Sometimes, it is true they are criticised for acts on the part of their subordinates of which they have never even heard, but the names of many high officers have been written on cairns that other men have raised. And who, if I may pursue the subject for a moment, are these men of whom I speak ? They are drawn from every part of the country and every rank of society. They are typical of the best of the British race and of British life. Some of them are the pick of your Universities. Others take to India names that have already been borne in that country by generations before them. Accident, no doubt, takes some into the Civil Service, hereditary associations take others, but I believe that it is the Englishman's passion for responsibility, his zest for action in a large field that is the ruling motive with most. And I think that they are right, for in India initiative is hourly born. There

*Viceroy Lord Curzon's speech at the Mansion House, Calcutta, on the subject of Indian Civil Service.

great deeds are constantly being done, there is room for fruition, there is a horizon for Resolution. I do not mean to say that it is not at Home, but to one coming back from a long service abroad those considerations are less patent to the eye. In the Guildhall this morning I saw men who had administered provinces with a population double than that of the United Kingdom, with a population, India excluded, half again as great as that of the whole British Empire. I have myself served with colleagues in India any one of whom would have been entitled to a place in the Imperial Cabinet, any one of whom would have risen to high place in any Government in the world. It is true that names of these men are not on the lips of their countrymen—their faces are unknown—but allow me to say for them on this rare occasion when I have the opportunity of speaking that they are the real Empire-builders, for in the sweat of their brow have they laid the foundations of which you in England only see the fair and glittering superstructure as it rears its head into the sky.

Administrative Ability of Englishmen

I sometimes think that in the catalogue of our national virtues we hardly lay sufficient stress upon the enormous administrative ability of the English race—I speak of ability as distinguished from the moral ingredients of character and courage, which are the more obvious elements of success; and yet, in all parts of the Empire, more especially in India, we have an amount of administrative ability which could not be purchased for millions of pounds sterling, and which is the envy of every other Empire-possessing nation in the world. They are perhaps not known at Home. Their services are only known to those under whom they work, but on an occasion like this, when the head of their service has the opportunity of speaking for them, he would do injustice to his own feelings and injustice to their service if he did not say a word on their behalf. I hope that in what I have just said I have not given the impression that I think the service of these men is unrecognised at Home. I do not believe there is any deliberate lack of interest or want of pride in their work. It rather arises from

the Englishman's familiar indifference to the great things he is doing on the face of the earth and his fussy and parochial agitation about the small things. If I may keep you a moment longer, there is one other aspect of the work of the Civil Service in India to which I should like to refer. I spoke this morning about the magnitude of the undertaking; let me add a word about the industry it entails. I sometimes hear people at Home speak about the members of the Indian Civil Service as though they were persons who had little else to do in India but perspire. At least, that is their idea about the men who live and work in the plains, and as for those happy ones, including myself, who go up to Simla or the hill stations, we are regarded as happy denizens of places where a mild frivolity alternates with an almost Olympian repose. That is not my experience of any seat of Government in India, whatever its altitude. I remember reading a story of two great Frenchmen—I believe they were M. Littre, the great lexicographer, and M. Dumas, the novelist. They are said at one time to have occupied the same residence and to have kept such different hours of work that when one of them was going upstairs in the early morning after completing the labours of the night he used to meet the other coming downstairs to commence the work of the day. I do not say that we have reached that point in India—Consule Planco—but there are many among the admirable Officers by whom I have been served who would not find it very startling.

The Men of the Plains

While we are speaking about service in India let me add one word about the men on the plains. I do not think any man ought to make a speech about India without remembering the men on the plains. All through the heat of the summer, when the earth is like iron and the skies are like brass, when during the greater part of the day every chink and crevice must be closed to keep out the ravening air, these men and their wives with them—for Englishwomen in India are just as capable of devotion and heroism as are their husbands—these men and women remain at their posts devoted and uncomplaining. They sometimes remind me rather of the men who are engaged in the

engine room of a great man of war; there they are stoking the furnace while the great ship is being manoueuvred and the big guns are thundering overhead, sometimes they go down with the vessel without ever having seen the battle or the fighting; but if their commander wins the victory, up they come, begrimmed with smoke, to take their share in the rejoicing. My Lord Mayor and gentlemen, these are the real organisers of victory and never let any man think of the service of his son or brother or relative in India without turning a thought to the men and women on the plains. Such, my Lord Mayor, is the character and such is the work of the men with whom it has been my privilege to co-operate during the last five and a half busy years. We have been living in strenuous times in India. I have heard it whispered that they have been too strenuous for some, but from the members of the Civil Service during the whole of this time I should never have learnt that fact. Though the work of reconstruction and reform which I was speaking about in the Guildhall this morning is one which must have imposed a heavy strain on their energies, I have never from any one of them, young or old, high or low, heard one murmur of protest or complaint. You will pardon me if I refer to this fact on the present occasion, and if I say that in accepting the compliment you have offered to me I think much more of them. It is on their behalf more than on my own that I gratefully acknowledge the gracious words you have spoken, and thank you for the manner in which you have proposed my health.

9

THE SITUATION IN INDIA AND TRANSFER OF POWER

I*

The course of events in India has been improving and is, on the whole, reassuring. The broad principles of the declaration made by His Majesty's Government which formed the basis of the Mission of Lord Privy Seal to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add anything to them, and no one can take anything away. The good offices of the Lord Privy Seal were rejected by the Indian Congress Party. This, however, does not end the matter. The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India. It does not represent the majority of the people of India. It does not even represent the Hindu masses. It is a political organisation built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. Outside the party and fundamentally opposed to it are the 90,000 000 Moslems in British India who have their rights of self-expression ; the 50,000,000 Depressed Classes, or the Untouchables as they are called because they are supposed to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow ; and the 95,000,000 subjects of the Princes of India with whom we are bound by treaties ; in all 235,000,000 in these three large groupings alone, out of about 390,000,000 in all India. This takes no account of large elements among the Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in British India who deplore the

*Speech of Prime Minister Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on political situation in India, 10 September, 1942.

present policy of the Congress Party. It is necessary that these main facts should not be overlooked here or abroad, because no comprehension of the Indian problem or of the relations between Britain and India is possible without the recognition of these basic data.

The Congress Party has now abandoned in many respects the policy of non-violence which Mr. Gandhi has so long inculcated in theory, and has come into the open as a revolutionary movement designed to paralyse the communications by rail and telegraph and generally to promote disorder, the looting of shops and sporadic attacks upon the Indian police, accompanied from time to time by revolting atrocities—the whole having the intention or at any rate the effect of hampering the defence of India against the Japanese invader who stands on the frontiers of Assam and also upon the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. It may well be that these activities of the Congress Party have been aided by Japanese fifth-column work on a widely-extended scale and with special direction to strategic points. It is noteworthy, for instance, that the communications of the Indian forces defending Bengal on the Assam frontier have been specialy attacked.

In these circumstances the Viceroy and Government of India, with the unanimous support of the Viceroy's Council, the great majority of which are Indians, patriotic and wise men, have felt it necessary to proclaim and suppress the central and provincial organs of this association which has become committed to hostile and criminal courses. Mr. Gandhi and other principal leaders have been interned under conditions of the highest comfort and consideration, and will be kept out of harm's way till the troubles subside.

It is fortunate, indeed, that the Congress Party has no influence whatever with the martial races, on whom the defence of India apart from British Forces largely depends. Many of these races are divided by unbridgeable religious gulfs from the Hindu Congress, and would never consent to be ruled by them. Nor shall they ever be against their will so subjugated. There is no compulsory service in India, but upwards of a million

Indians have volunteered to serve the cause of the United Nations in this world struggle. The bravery of the Indian troops has been distinguished in many theatres of war, and it is satisfactory to note that in these last two months, when the Congress has been measuring its strength against the Government of India, more than 140,000 new volunteers for the Army have come forward in loyal allegiance to the King-Emperor, thus surpassing all records in order to defend their native land. So far as matters have gone up to the present, they have revealed the impotence of the Congress Party either to seduce or even sway the Indian Army, to draw from this duty the enormous body of Indian officials, or still less to stir the vast Indian masses.

India is a continent, almost as large as and actually more populous than Europe, and divided by racial and above all by religious difference far deeper than any that have separated Europeans. The whole administration of the government of the 390,000,000 who live in India is carried on by Indians, there being under 600 British members of the Indian Civil Service. All the public services are working. In five provinces, including two of the greatest and comprising 110,000,000 people, provincial ministers responsible to their Legislatures stand at their posts. In many places, both in town and country, the population has rallied to the support of the civil power. The Congress conspiracy against the communications is breaking down. Acts of pillage and arson are being repressed and punished with incredibly small loss of life. Less than 500 persons have been killed over this mighty area of territory and population and it has only been necessary to move a few brigades of British troops here and there in support of the civil power. In most case the rioters have been successfully dealt with by the Indian police. I am sure the House would wish me to pay a tribute to the loyalty and steadfastness of these brave Indian police, as well as of the Indian official classes generally, whose behaviour has been deserving of the highest praise.

To sum up, the outstanding fact which has so far emerged from the violent action of the Congress Party has been their

non-representative character and their powerlessness to throw into confusion the normal peaceful life of India. It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to give all necessary support to the Viceroy and his Executive in the firm but tempered measures by which they are protecting the life of the Indian community and leaving the British and Indian Armies free to defend the soil of India against the Japanese.

I may add that large reinforcements have reached India, and that the numbers of white soldiers now in that country, though very small compared with its size and population, are larger than at any time in the British connection. I, therefore, feel entitled to report to the House that the situation in India at this moment gives no occasion for undue despondency or alarm.

II*

I think the right hon. Gentleman [The Prime Minister] was right to read to the House the able but melancholy document to which we have listened, and it was appropriate that he should read it, instead of merely circulating it with the Votes. Certainly I have heard nothing for a long time which so deeply deserves the attention of Parliament and of the British nation, and the respectful attention which the House gave to every word uttered by the Prime Minister is a proof that this opinion is well founded. It would, of course, be most unwise this afternoon for any of us to attempt detailed comment upon the long and complicated proposals which have now been laid before us. I am bound to make clear without delay what is the position of the official Opposition. I, as the head of the Coalition Government and my colleagues of those days, are committed to the offer made to the people of India at the time of the Cripps mission in 942, by which we offered Dominion Status as expressed by the Statute of Westminster, including, as it does, the latent right of secession. We offered this to the many peoples of India, subject to certain provisions.

*Churchill's speech in the House of Commons on 16 May 1946.

The first of those provisions was that there should be broad, real, sincere agreement between the main Indian parties. The second was that in the Constitution we should have provision for the honourable discharge of the obligations we have contracted in India towards the minorities who, added together, are themselves a majority, and, also, for the discharge of those obligations embodied in our treaties with the Indian States. These proposals were made by us at a moment when the danger of Japanese invasion threatened India in a terrible manner, and I, personally, was induced to agree to them by the all-compelling war interest, as it seemed, or trying to rally all the forces in India to the defence of their soil against Japanese aggression and all the horrors that would follow thereform.

The Cripps mission failed. The answer which Mr. Gandhi gave to the British Government at that moment of mortal peril was "Quit India," and he and the Congress proceeded to raise or encourage a revolt, or widespread disturbances, affecting, principally, the communications on which the British and Indian Forces relied for holding the threatened fronts. These disorders, although seriously fomented, were suppressed with surprising ease and very little loss of life, and the incitement to revolt found practically no response, outside the political classes, from the great masses of the Indian people. We persevered with the war ; we toiled on ; and presently the tide turned. India was successfully defended, and it emerged from this second world convulsion of our lifetime protected from external violence by the arms, sea power and diplomacy at the disposal of the British Empire, including, of course, the valiant contribution of the Indian Forces themselves and of the Gurkhas from Nepal. Nevertheless, we still persisted in our offer which had been rejected in 1942, and the late Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, on June 14 last, when the Government had ceased to be a Coalition and was a Conservative Government, used the following words, which were quoted by my right hon. Friend the Member of Saffron Walden [Mr. R.A. Butler] when the proposal was made to send the Cabinet Mission to India in February. This is what Mr. Amery said :

"As the statement makes clear, the offer of March 1942, stands in its entirety. That offer was based on two main principles. The first is that no limit is set to India's freedom to decide for herself her own destiny, whether as a free member and partner in the British Commonwealth or even without it. The second is that this can only be achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by Indians to which the main element in India's national life are consenting parties".

By that statement we were and we are bound. Now, however, a new situation has arisen. We are confronted with the fact, reiterated in the Prime Minister's statement, that there is no agreement. The main elements in India's national life are not at the present time "consenting parties"—I am quoting the words of Mr. Amery's speech. No one will doubt the sincerity and the earnestness with which the Cabinet Ministers concerned and the Viceroy [Lord Wavell], have laboured to bring about the solution of Indian disagreement. They have worked for that solution with the zeal that would be natural if it were to gain an empire and not to cast one away. But they have failed, and the fact that they have failed, through no fault of their own, in spite of all their efforts, devotion and ingenuity, is a fact which should, in itself, be an education in Indian matters, not only throughout this country, but throughout the world. During these negotiations it has been increasingly clear that the object sought for was not Dominion Status, with the subsequent and consequent right of secession, but direct and immediate independence. I am not sure that the results of this short circuit have been fully realized by the House. It certainly came as a surprise to me.

Thirdly, the new proposals which we have heard seem, at first sight, to shift the onus of deciding the future constitution of India from the Indian parties to His Majesty's Government, who have themselves come forward no doubt from the best of motives, with an elaborate and detailed scheme. In so far as this shifting of the onus may prove to be the case, it certainly seems to have been an unfortunate step. It goes beyond what we understood was the purpose of the Minister's mission,

the mandate which they received, which was—it was so defined by the Prime Minister, I think—to set up machinery for Indians to decide the form of government. It will, I hope, be common ground between us that we cannot enforce by British arms a British-made Constitution upon India against the wishes of any of the main elements in Indian life. That is a very important fact to establish.

There remains the discharge of our obligations to the Indian minorities and to the Indian States. We must study the document with prolonged and searching attention in order to see that these duties have been faithfully safeguarded. It would seem, at first sight, that attention should be particularly directed to the position of the Muslim community of nearly 80 million, who are the most warlike and formidable of all the races and creeds in the Indian sub-continent, and whose interests and culture are a matter of great consequence to India as a whole, and vital to the peace of India. Secondly, we must examine the provisions made for the depressed classes, or "untouchables" as they are called, who number nearly 60 million, and for whose status and future repeated assurances have been given and pledges made by many British Governments, in ancient and in more recent times.

Finally, there are the relations which the Indian States, which comprise a quarter of the population and a third of the territory of the Indian sub-continent, are to have to the Crown and to the new Government. At present, those relations are defined by solemn treaties dependent upon the paramountcy of the Crown. Apparently, this is to be abolished, in a sentence which was obscure : it may be neither one thing nor the other. It would be relegated to a kind of "no man's land," this question of paramountcy ; and if that be so, it would seem—I do not attempt to probe the legal issues—that all foundation for these treaties would be swept away.

All these matters and many others will occur to hon. Members as they study the able White Paper. It will require several weeks of profound and earnest consideration, and

certainly it would not, in my view, be desirable to bring this whole matter to debate in the House of Commons, with all that a debate in these circumstances might entail, in any precipitate manner. We do not even know at the present time, although we may elucidate that by question and answer, what are the legislative steps which would be required in, the setting up of an interim government, or, in the event of an agreement being reached, for the creation of a new Constitution, or for the abrogation of the King's title as Emperor of India. Therefore, I say, in the name of the Opposition, that a new situation has been created, that we are bound to review it in the light of existing facts, and that we reserve our entire freedom of action as to the future course we shall take.

III*

Everyone is glad to see that the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Stafford Cripps') health is restored. We were anxious about him when he was in India, because naturally these long, intense, soul-stirring conferences with Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Nehru, accompanied by the exceptionally hot weather of the Indian summer, might well have imposed a very severe strain upon him, but we are glad to see to-day that his health is restored. He has certainly given us a very long and categorical statement of the Mission on which he has been engaged with two other Members of the Government. I shall not attempt to follow him in any proportionate length I hope he will not think it disrespectful on any part if I do not attempt to make a reply covering the entire ground, because I thought we were all agreed that it is better to put off the general Debate upon this tremendous event in the history of India, and in our history, until we meet again in the autumn. If everyone were to do full justice to all the aspects upon which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has touched, it is perfectly certain that we should only reach our other attractive topic of bread rationing at a very late hour to-night.

We shall see more clearly, I think, in the autumn how matters stand, and we shall see the outlines, at any rate, of the

*Speech of Churchill in the House of Commons on Cabinet Mission Plan, 18 July, 1946.

decisions which have to be taken. The Government have promised a full dress Debate at a convenient moment, and the Mission recommends, by implication, the postponement of the discussion until then. When we return after the Recess, we shall have that Debate, and all I wish to do now is to put on record some of the principal divergences which separate us, as well as recognising the points to which we are committed.

For good or ill, we are all committed to the offer made at the time of what I may call the Cripps Missión in the spring of 1942. That offer was made at the moment when the Japanese held full naval command of the Bay of Bengal, and it seemed that India might be invaded and ravaged by a large Japanese army. I, as Prime Minister, took my full share of responsibility in those circumstances for making the offer of 1942. Those days of peril are gone. Although we received no assistance from the Congress Party of India, whose attitude throughout the war was one of non-co-operation, in spite of that, 2,000,000 or more Indians volunteered to fight for the cause of freedom. The Congress Party gave us no assistance ; on the contrary, they did us the greatest injury in their power, but the disorders were easily suppressed and the danger of foreign invasion was warded off.

Mr. Cove [Aberavon] : What did the Muslim League do ?

Mr. Churchill : The Muslim League did not give active co-operation as a League, but the Punjab State alone produced upwards of 800,000 volunteers. The remarkable thing, since I am drawn into this by this interruption, is that the political parties did not at all sway the influence and actions of the Indian millions. Millions of men volunteered, without conscription, to fight, and great numbers gave their aid in war work, and the political parties, who are the only parties with whom the Government are dealing, had no means of controlling the enthusiasm and loyalty of their people.

Nevertheless, although, as I say, we got no assistance, we declared that the offer which we had made should stand. The present Government had, therefore, a right to our agreement and support in sending out the Mission of Cabinet Ministers,

who have just returned after arduous experiences. The directions given to the Mission, however, went beyond, and, as I hold, needlessly beyond, those which governed the wartime Cripps Mission of 1942. The Coalition offer was, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman has just remined us, of Dominion status, which includes, of course, the Clause in the Statute of Westminster, what we might call the escalator Clause, which affirmed the right of secession, in the last resort, from the British Commonwealth of Nations by any Dominion. The Coalition offer was also conditional upon agreement being reached between the principal parties in India, so that the offer of full Dominion status, including the right to secede, would not lead to disastrous, and possibly devastating, civil war.

His Majest's present Government went beyond the offer of 1942. They instructed their delegates to offer full independence directly, instead of Dominion status, which left the final decision open to a fully-constituted Dominion of India seeing how they were getting on and how the general situation by. So far as I can see, the result which is now put before us—and nothing in the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman in any way detracts from it—is the immediate independence of India and the severance of all constitutional ties uniting the former Indian Empire to the British Commonwealth of Nations. I wish to register my dissent from this extension and short-circuiting of the original offer. The responsibility for making the further advance and for pressing full and immediate independence upon India without giving Indians a chance to get into the saddle and look around to see where their broad interests lie —the responsibility for that is the responsibility of the present Government, and I, for my part, can share no part of that responsibility. I consider that this short-circuiting or telescoping of the normal and reasonable constitutional processes upon which both parties were agreed does not give the best chance of a happy or peaceful solution of the Indian problem, and that, having regard to the elements in India to whom the Government mainly addressed themselves, it prejudges, in an adverse sense, the case of whether the vast sub-continent of India, with its population

of 400,000,000, should remain, of its own free will, within the circle of the association of the British Commonwealth. The Government had the power to make this change and theirs is the responsibility for making it. That is all I am concerned to establish to-day. I am not going to trespass, if I can avoid it, upon merits. I am merely showing where we lie in the relationship to this formidable and enormous topic.

Secondly, the offer of 1942 was conditional upon agreement being reached among the principal forces and parties in the life of India. This has certainly not been achieved. The Mission proceeded themselves to shape the outlines of the settlement, and to endeavour, as far as possible, to induce all the elements concerned to agree to it as a working basis. Again, I do not challenge the right of the Government to take this action, for which, no doubt, they have a large Parliamentary majority. I am only trying to make it clear that, in this respect also—the question of agreement—the Government have gone beyond any position to which I and my colleagues in the National Coalition Government were committed by the offer of 1942. I do not think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman denies that.

Sir S. Cripps : Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me ? Surely, the right hon. Gentleman will agree that I had precisely the same job to do in 1942 ? I took a scheme which was got out by the Government and I tried to get both parties to agree to it. That is exactly what has happened in this case.

Mr. Churchill : My point was that the right hon. and learned Gentleman took out a different scheme. As a great precision man, and a man of the highest legalistic attainment, a small point like that ought not to have escaped his notice.

Sir S. Cripps : The right hon. Gentleman is very amusing, but not quite accurate. What he was saying that we ought not to have imposed some settlement, but that it should be a condition that both parties agreed to it and that, in this case, they had not agreed to it and it was something which we had imposed upon them. I was pointing out that, in 1942, under

the right hon. Gentleman's Government, a scheme was got out by the Cabinet in London and was sent out, and my object was to try to get both parties to agree to a scheme which was sent out from London. The right hon. Gentleman cannot complain that what we have done now is to get two parties to agree to a scheme.

Mr. Churchill : In the first place, the right hon. and learned Gentleman has not got the two parties to agree ; they are in the most violent disagreement, and their passion is mounting day by day. In the second place, the scheme which he took out was a different one. In the third place, when that scheme did not commend itself to those to whom he addressed himself, he took the positive action—and I do not say he was wrong from his point of view to do it—of trying to solve the Indian problem for the Indians instead of leaving it to the Indians to solve, or not to solve. He took the positive course of trying to solve it, and proposed a basis on which he hoped they would come together.

Sir. S Cripps : As in 1942.

Mr. Churchill : In 1942, the right hon. Gentleman had no authorisation to attempt to make a separate declaration apart from any view built up between Indians, as he has done now. I am not making this a complaint against the right hon. and learned Gentleman ; I can quite see that when they were there and nobody would agree to anything, the third party came in and said, "Let us have a try. Won't you agree to this ?" All I say is, that it is quite different from the proposals to which we agreed.

There is a third point of great importance, namely, the faithful discharge of our obligation, contracted over so many years and affirmed by so many British Governments, to the various minorities in India, I was sorry that in his speech of, I think, 15 March, the Prime Minister should have spoken in a somewhat adverse, or at least uncertain sense, about the rights of minorities, because the protection of those fundamental rights affects our duty to discharge the pledges which we have so often given. These minorities in India are very considerable.

The right hon and learned Gentleman has mentioned several of them to-day. There are, for instance, the 40 to 60 million of the depressed classes who are consternated by the lack of representation which they are to receive in the future Constituent Assembly. I have received most vehement and painful appeals from the leaders of these great communities, and I discussed them with my colleagues on this side of the House.

When one speaks of a community as large as 60 million, the word "minority" loses much of its significance. Such immense masses of human beings deserve to be treated with respect and consideration, positively and not relatively, even if there are other and still larger masses who take a different view. After all, in these islands we have only 46 million, a much smaller number than the depressed classes of India. We should be sorry just to be called a minority by Europe and to have our way of life ordered for us by a mass vote of all the other countries. In fact, I think that we should very likely recur, with satisfaction, to our insular position. When the issue affecting minorities numbered by scores of million is also one which concerns the fundamental rights of those minorities, all pledges with regard to them require most scrupulous attention by the ruling authority at the moment it hands over these masses, with their fate and their fortunes, to another system of Government. That is a point which, I trust, will not be found to be one of difference in principle, although there may be difference in emphasis.

Then there are the Muslims—who number over 80 million—and make up so large a majority of the martial races of India. There is no doubt that there is a complete lack of agreement at the present time between the two principal communities. The Mission have laboured hard, and they have dealt particularly with these two communities, allowing many other valuable and important forces, who have a right to live also, to fall back into the background. As between these two communities, the difficulties were never more acute and the gulf never more wide than at the present moment. The outlook is very grave. The acceptance by the martial races of the final

settlement which we shall make before we leave India is indispensable to future peace.

Thirdly, among the elements which go to make up India, are the Indian States which, together, comprise nearly 95 million. The position of these States has been fixed by solemn treaties made with their rulers. It is proposed to abrogate those treaties and to abolish the principle of paramountcy which, at present, alone defines the relationship of these States—in some cases almost nations, in some cases models of good government in India—to whatever new Central Government is set up in India. If all the minorities are added together, they constitute much more than half the inhabitants of India, I am glad to say that, as far as I understand the position. His Majesty's Government have not abandoned the principle of the discharge of their responsibilities towards the minorities in India which aggregate at least 225 million out of 400 million. I hope we shall hear from the First Lord of the Admiralty that they have not abandoned their responsibilities in that matter.

The attitude of the Mission, and of the Government whom they represented, is expressed on this point in a single sentence of the plan which they put before the representatives of Indian life with whom they dealt. This is the sentence :

> "When the Constituent Assembly has completed its labours, His Majesty's Government will recommend to Parliament such action as may be necessary for the cession of sovereignty to the Indian people subject only to two provisos which are mentioned in the statement and which are not, we believe, controversial, namely, adequate provision for the protection of minorities, and willingness to conclude a treaty to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power."

This seems to me to be a somewhat light, optimistic and almost casual manner of treating responsibilities extending to an appreciable part of a human race and touching those fundamental rights—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—which we have regarded as the birthright of every human being. It makes it clear, however, and all I desire to do is to

emphasise this by putting on record that all arrangements to be made by the Constituent Assembly, and any treatise which may subsequently be brought into existence between the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain and the new sovereign independent Government of India, must be subject to the fulfilment of the honourable discharge of our obligations. I hope we are agreeable on that. I hope we are not going to hear a contradiction from the First Lord on that. A Bill, or perhaps several Bills, will have to be presented to Parliament and will have to pass through all their stages, and that is the time when the final decision will have to be taken. Nothing must be agreed to by us at the moment of the transference of sovereignty which will be in derogation of our solemn undertaking.

I cannot conclude without referring to the question of the interim Government, in respect of which the right hon. and learned Gentleman gave us a full exposition. A great part of the Mission's work in India was devoted to the vain attempt to form a coalition cabinet acceptable alike to the Muslims and to the caste Hindus, and this Cabinet was to replace the Viceroy's Executive Council which was dismissed in order to clear the decks and make room for the new government. There was to be no change for the time being in the constitutional position. What it has led to is a temporary reversion in so far as personnel is concerned, to a government of well tried and experienced officials. In fact, for the moment, but only for the moment, Indian affairs have gone full circle, and we are back again at the system of 40 years ago before the Morley-Minto reforms. Everyone can see that this cannot last very long. Moreover, from the reports which I have received from India, the Muslim community feel themselves deeply aggrieved by what they regard as a departure from the terms of Paragraph 8 of the statement of 16 June made by the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. This statement runs as follows :

> "In the event of the two major parties or either of them proving unwilling to join in the setting up of a coalition government on the above lines, it is the intention of the Viceroy to proceed with the formation of an interim government which will be as representative as possible of those willing to accept the statement of 16 May."

The Muslim League agreed to enter this, and when the Hindu Congress members refused, or it broke down on this point of procedure, I understand that the Muslim League made a violent complaint. I see the force of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's argument that it is very difficult to form a coalition with only one party, or even to form a coalition and fill it up with civil servants and non-party figures. I believe that would be a difficulty. At the same time, there is the feeling among the Muslims of India that faith has been broken with them. I am not making that charge. On the contrary, I can see that it is a misunderstanding, but there is no doubt that there is a serious misunderstanding.

Sir S. Cripps : I would like to correct one point as regards the timing. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Muslims accepted and then Congress refused. But Congress had refused before the Muslims arrived at any decision, and they knew before they arrived at a decision, that it was unless for them to arrive at a decision because already the scheme had gone.

Mr. Churchill : I am not making an accusation against the Government in the matter. I am sure the right hon and learned Gentleman does not deal with people in bad faith, and those gentlemen who were there may have been misunderstood. There has been a serious misunderstanding, but the consequences of the misunderstanding carry us forward into the future. The General Secretary of the Muslim League has gone so far as to say that unless the situation is clarified, it would be suicidal for the League to enter into a Constituent Assembly. All this appears to raise the most formidable issues, because I can assure the Government—and those who have been to India know well—that the agreement of the Muslims to the new system affects the whole foundation of the problem. One cannot contemplate that British troops should be used to crush the Muslims in the interests of the caste Hindus. Whatever our responsibilities may be, whatever may be the day appointed on which we quit India, we must not make ourselves the agents of a caste Government, or a particular sectional Government in order to crush by armed force and modern weapons, another community which, although not so numerous, is numbered at 90 millions.

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MESSAGE OF LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

On this historic day when India takes her place as a free and independent Dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations, I send you all my greetings and heartfelt wishes.

Freedom-loving people everywhere will wish to share in your celebrations, for with this transfer of power by consent comes the fulfilment of a great democratic ideal to which the British and Indian peoples alike are firmly dedicated. It is inspiring to think that all this has been achieved by means of peaceful change.

Heavy responsibilities lie ahead of you, but when I consider the statesmanship you have already shown and the great sacrifices you have already made, I am confident that you will be worthy of your destiny.

I pray that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon you and that your leaders may continue to be guided with wisdom in the tasks before them. May the blessings of friendship, tolerance and peace inspire you in your relations with the nations of the world. Be assured always of my sympathy in all your efforts to promote the prosperity of your people and the general welfare of mankind.

It is barely six months ago that Mr. Attlee invited me to accept the appointment of last Viceroy. He made it clear that this would be no easy task—since, His Majesty's Government

*Address delivered by the Governor—General to the Constituent Assembly of India on the Independence Day, 15 August, 1947.

in the United Kingdom had decided to transfer power to Indian hands by June, 1948. At that time it seemed to many that His Majesty's Government had set a date far too early. How could this tremendous operation be completed in 15 months ?

However, I had not been more than a week in India before I realized that this date of June, 1948, for the transfer of power was too late rather than too early ; communal tension and rioting had assumed proportions of which I had no conception when I left England. It seemed to me that a decision had to be taken at the earliest possible moment unless there was to be risk of a general conflagration throughout the whole sub-continent.

I entered into discussions with the leaders of all the parties at once—and the result was the plan of June 3. Its acceptance has been hailed as an example of fine statesmanship throughout the world. The plan was evolved at every stage by a process of open diplomacy with the leaders. Its success is chiefly attributable to them.

I believe that this system of open diplomacy was the only one suited to the situation in which the problems were so complex and the tension so high. I would here pay tribute to the wisdom, tolerance and friendly help of the leaders which have enabled the transfer of power to take place ten and-a half months earlier than originally intended.

At the very meeting at which the plan of June 3 was accepted, the leaders agreed to discuss a paper which I had laid before them on the administrative consequences of partition ; and then and there we set up the machinery which was to carry out one of the greatest administrative operations in history—the partition of a sub-continent of 400 million inhabitants and the transfer of power to two independent Governments in less than two-and a-half months.

My reason for hastening these processes was that, once the principle of division had been accepted, it was in the interest of all parties that it should be carried out with the utmost

speed. We set a pace faster in fact than many at the time thought possible. To the Ministers and officials who have laboured day and night to produce this astonishing result, the greatest credit is due.

I know well that the rejoicing which the advent of freedom brings is tempered in your hearts by the sadness that it could not come to a united India ; and that the pain of division has shorn today's events of some of its joy. In supporting your leaders in the difficult decision which they had to take, you have displayed as much magnanimity and realism as have those patriotic statesmen themselves.

These statesmen have placed me in their debt for ever by their sympathetic understanding of my position. They did not, for example, press their original request that I should be the Chairman of the Arbitral Tribunal. Again they agreed from the outset to release me from my responsibility whatsoever for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal.

It was they who slected the personnel of the Boundary Commission including the Chairman ; it was they who drew up the terms of reference ; it is they who shoulder the responsibility for implementing the award. You will appreciate that had they not done that, I would have been placed in an impossible position.

Let me now pass to the Indian States. The plan of June 3 dealt almost exclusively with the problem of the transfer of power in British India ; and the only reference to the States was a paragraph which recognized that on the transfer of power, all the Indian States—565 of them—would become independent. Here then was another gigantic problem and there was apprehension on all sides. But after the formation of the States Department it was possible for me, as Crown's Representative, to tackle this great question. Thanks to that farsighted statesman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Minister in-charge of the States Department, a scheme was produced which appeared to me to be equally in the interests of the States as of Dominion of India. The overwhelming majority of States are geographi-

cally linked with India, and therefore this Dominion had by far the bigger stake in the solution of this problem.

It is a great triumph for the realism and sense of responsibility of the Rulers and the Governments of the States, as well as for the Government of India, that it was possible to produce an Instrument of Accession which was equally acceptable to both sides ; and one, moreover, so simple and so straightforward that within less than three weeks practically all the States concerned had signed the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement. There is thus established a unified political structure covering over 300 million people and the major part of this great sub-continent. The only State of the first importance that has not yet acceded is the premier State, Hyderabad.

Hyderabad occupies a unique position in view of its size, population and resources, and it has its special problems. The Nizam, while he does not propose to accede to the Dominion of Pakistan, has not upto the present felt able to accede to the Dominion of India. His Exalted Highness has, however, assured me of his wish to cooperate in the three essential subjects of External Affairs, Defence and Communications with that Dominion whose territories surround his State. With the assent of the Government, negotiations will be continued with the Nizam and I am hopeful that we shall reach a solution satisfactory to all.

From today I am your constitutional Governor-General and I would ask you to regard me as one of yourselves, devoted wholly to the furtherance of India's interests. I am honoured that you have endorsed the invitation originally made to me by your leaders to remain as your Governor-General. The only consideration I had in mind in accepting was that I might continue to be of some help to you in the difficult days which lie immediately ahead.

When discussing the Draft of the Indian Independence Act your leaders selected March 31, 1948, as the end of what may be called the interim period. I propose to ask to be released

in April. It is not that I fail to appreciate the honour of being invited to stay on in your service, but I feel that as soon as possible India should be at liberty, if you so wish, to have one of her own people as her Governor-General. Until then my wife and I will consider it a privilege to continue to work with and amongst you.

No words can express our gratitude for the understanding and co-operation as well as the true sympathy and generosity of spirit which have been shown to us at all times.

I am glad to announce that "my" Government—as I am now constitutionally entitled and most proud to call them—have decided to mark this historic occasion by a generous programme of amnesty. The categories are as wide as could be consistent with the overriding consideration of public morality and safety, and special account has been taken of political motives. This policy will also govern the release of military prisoners undergoing sentences as a result of trial by courts-martial.

The tasks before you are heavy. The war ended two years ago. In fact, it was on this very day two years ago that I was with that great friend of India, Mr. Attlee, in his Cabinet Room when the news came through that Japan has surrendered. That was a moment for thankfulness and rejoicing, for it marked the end of six bitter years of destruction and slaughter. But in India we have achieved something greater—what has been well described as "A Treaty of Peace without a War."

Nevertheless, the ravages of the war are still apparent all over the world. India, which played such a valiant part, as I can personally testify from my experience in South-East Asia, has also had to pay her price in the dislocation of her economy and the casualties to her gallant fighting men with whom I was so proud to be associated. Preoccupations with the political problem retarded recovery. It is for you to ensure the happiness and ever-increasing prosperity of the people, to provide against future scarcities of food, cloth and essential commodities and to build up a balanced economy. The solution of these

problems requires immediate and whole-hearted effort and farsighted planning, but I feel confident that with your resources in men, material and leadership you will prove equal to the task.

What is happening in India is of far more than purely national interest. The emergence of a stable and prosperous State will be a factor of the greatest international importance for the peace of the world. In social and economic development, as well as its strategic situation and its wealth of resources, invest with great significance the events that take place here. It is for this reason that not only Great Britain and the sister Dominions but all the great nations of the world will watch with sympathetic expectancy the fortunes of this country and will wish it all prosperity and success.

At this historic moment, let us not forget all that India owes to Mahatma Gandhi—the architect of her freedom through non-violence. We miss his presence here today, and would have him know how much he is in our thoughts.

Mr. President, I would like you and our other colleagues of the late Interim Government to know how deeply I have appreciated your unfailing support and cooperation.

In your first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, you have a world-renowned leader of courage and vision. His trust and friendship have helped me beyond measure in my task. Under his able guidance, assisted by the colleagues whom he has selected, and with the loyal cooperation of the people, India will attain a position of strength and influence and take her rightful place in the comity of nations.

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